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# Resurrected: an In-Depth Study of Fitzgerald's Female Found in The Basil Stories and the Great Gatsby

Therese Fields  
*Seton Hall University*

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**Resurrected: An In-Depth Study of Fitzgerald's Female Found in The Basil  
Stories and *The Great Gatsby*.**

**By: Therese Fields**

**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Masters of Arts in the Department of English**

**Seton Hall University**

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Approved by: James R. Lindroth  
Thesis Mentor

John P. Wargo  
Second Reader

Thesis Mentor

Second Reader

When people hear the name F. Scott Fitzgerald they quickly think of his masterpiece, *The Great Gatsby*. Fitzgerald's *Gatsby* is the great American novel. Why? It withstands time and the changes of contemporary society. This novel moves us, shakes us, and reminds us of our enlightening dreams and the realistic truths behind them. Why do readers connect with and feel empathy for the flawed Jay Gatsby? We, like Gatsby, hope for the green light and all that it holds in store for us. Gatsby is driven by the green light, which represents his hope to change the past. It is this idealistic dream, this flaw that acts as the glue forever connecting Gatsby to his readers. I believe *The Great Gatsby* is one of the greatest novels ever written. It is a novel that moved me the first time I read it in 10<sup>th</sup> grade and one which continues to influence me today. It is one of those books I look forward to teaching each year. As I have told my students, like the great William Shakespeare, Fitzgerald generates texts that have everything we would want in a book—glitz and glitter, love and lust, dreams and truths, murder and beauty.

When I first fell in love with *The Great Gatsby*, I became interested in reading Fitzgerald's other books and stories. However, it was not until graduate school that I became aware of a series known as *The Basil and Josephine Stories*. Once I began reading these stories, I noticed a pattern among the female characters that was also contained in *The Great Gatsby*. This pattern aroused so much interest within me that I decided to make it the focus of my thesis. As I began working on my idea, I noticed it was more than a pattern. I had located a distinct female character and personality. Working with Fitzgerald's the Basil stories and *The Great Gatsby*, my paper traces how Fitzgerald did not develop numerous female personalities within his works, but instead fashioned one distinct female character and personality. While looking at these two



works, the following females from the Basil stories will be discussed: Margaret Torrence, Imogene Bissel, Evelyn Beebe, Jobena Dorsey, and Minnie Bibble, and from *The Great Gatsby*, Daisy Buchanan. These females will provide support for my argument.

In Fitzgerald's personal experiences with women, he cultivated a dynamic female driven by power, money, and excellence (Brucoli 10 ). Fitzgerald's fictional female is resilient, shrewd, indifferent, beautiful, appealing, and dangerous. She is resilient because she has a cause and that cause is to excel in a "man's world." Her shrewd nature is demonstrated in her ability to play a multitude of roles. She is the quintessential actress. While playing a variety of roles, she is always the focus of her cause. Her beauty cannot be denied. Not only is she beautiful, but also charming and appealing. Danger lies around each corner, because she takes many risks to obtain power, money, and excellence. Dualistic in nature, Fitzgerald designs a female who can be read as both aggressive and passive, virgin and vixen, powerful and powerless. Thus, Fitzgerald produced a distinct female character, who is resurrected to play a variety of roles, but also to act as an inspiration or muse helping in the creation of new writing venues.

As a reader of Fitzgerald and the 1920s, people may find his portrayal of women avant-garde. What does Fitzgerald's female reveal about his opinions in regards to women? Is Fitzgerald a chauvinist, a feminist, both, or neither? Fitzgerald is not a feminist or a chauvinist, but he is instead a man hurt by women (Brucoli 10). The pain Ginevra King brought upon Fitzgerald influenced him to develop a masculine yet feminine woman driven by power, beauty, intelligence, and danger. Early American novels like Susanna Rowson's *Charlotte Temple* and later novels like Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth* include "dangerous" females, but they died by the conclusion of the

novel. Why doesn't Fitzgerald kill his females? Fitzgerald's females live because he is attracted to their personalities, which are similar to the ones that he encountered in his life (i.e. Ginevra King) (Brucoli 10).

According to Mathew Brucoli's *F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby: A Literary Reference*, Fitzgerald repeatedly incorporated the theme of "a poor young man not being able to marry a girl with money" (10). This theme can be traced in Fitzgerald's relationship with Ginevra King and in his novel, *The Great Gatsby*. If it was not for the selling of his first novel and the money that he earned from it, Fitzgerald would have lost Zelda Sayre. Brucoli mentions how "Fitzgerald had almost lost Zelda also because of his lack of money, but he finally won her. It was the wound over Ginevra that never healed" (10). Fitzgerald's pain or "wound" was one he lived with each day. It was this pain that influenced him to develop females who were beautiful, yet cruel, indifferent, careless, and cold. Like Jay Gatsby, Fitzgerald hoped to "change the past." He hoped to develop a beautiful, kind, intelligent female; however Fitzgerald's pain fueled the development of characters that reminded him of his past.

As a result of this argument, I not only received an opportunity to work with a series of stories that have been largely overlooked in research, but I also received an opportunity to work with a book that is one of my passions. When I embarked on this journey I did not realize how strongly this paper would deepen my admiration for *The Great Gatsby*, and provide me with an added appreciation for the Basil stories. It also should be noted that my study should act as a mere beginning for further studies into Fitzgerald's females and short fiction.

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## PART I: Survey of Research

### Overview

The plethora of research written on *The Great Gatsby* is a testimony of its inspiring power, national and international acclaim. When viewing the critical research as a whole, it seems as though “the greats” (e.g. H.L. Mencken, Arthur Mizener, Lionel Trilling, James E. Miller, and Harold Bloom) and contemporary Fitzgerald scholars (e.g. Jackson R. Bryer, John Kuehl, Mathew Bruccoli and Ronald Berman) have each had a chance to write on *The Great Gatsby*. Unlike *The Great Gatsby*, very little research has been written on the Basil stories. The research that does exist on the Basil stories is relatively new, as compared to *The Great Gatsby*, which has been generating extensive critical research since the 1940s.

Recently, scholars have begun the fight in promoting Fitzgerald’s short fiction. For example, Jackson R. Bryer’s book, *New Essays on F. Scott Fitzgerald’s Neglected Stories* (1996), presents a myriad of articles written on Fitzgerald’s individual short stories and series stories. Fitzgerald generated over 150 stories and very little accumulated research today pertains to his short fiction or in particular, the Basil stories. Thus, Fitzgerald’s novels, (i.e. *The Great Gatsby*) generate more critical articles as compared to the lesser-known short stories, (i.e. the Basil stories).

From my research findings, I also found a lack of articles dedicated to Fitzgerald’s female characters. Of course, articles exist on Daisy Buchanan; however, the number is slim as compared to essays on Jay Gatsby or Nick Carraway. Early critical essays written in the 1950s malign Daisy’s character. It was not until Leslie A. Fiedler’s groundbreaking critical study, *Love and Death in the American Novel*, that critics and

readers began to take a serious look at Daisy Buchanan. Unlike the Daisy research, articles specific to individual female characters from the Basil stories could not be found. On the contemporary landscape more research has looked at the Basil stories; however, the female characters have not been examined. Ultimately, more research exists on *The Great Gatsby* and Daisy as compared to the Basil stories and its female characters.

A more extensive explanation of my findings will be discussed in the following two sections. These two sections will highlight two specific time periods: 1940-1960 and 1985-2000 while focusing upon the research written on Fitzgerald's Basil stories and *The Great Gatsby*. The findings discussed in these sections will illustrate content, past and present, pertaining to Daisy and the female characters from the Basil stories. My findings will also demonstrate the lack of critical research available on Fitzgerald's female characters.

## **The Great Gatsby-The Revival 1940-1960**

### **1940s**

*The Great Gatsby* was first published in 1925, initial reviews were positive; however, the novel did not sell. Fitzgerald died in 1940, never knowing the acclaim his novel would receive. In 1941, Scribner republished *The Great Gatsby*, causing the resurrection for all things Fitzgerald. As a result of this event, the revival influenced people to buy and read *The Great Gatsby*. There were several essays written during the 1940s; however, the 1950s produced an influx of critical articles. By the 1960s, *The Great Gatsby* was respected and viewed as an American classic (Brucoli, 217).

During the 1940s, William Troy, Arthur Mizener, Malcolm Cowley, and Lionel Trilling wrote critical essays on *The Great Gatsby*. These men acted as pioneers for

Gatsby research, providing later critics with ideas to ponder and develop. One article important to my research is Arthur Mizener's essay, "The Poet of Borrowed Time." This article was first published in 1956. Mizener's essay was reprinted in Nicolas Tredell's *Columbia Critical Guides: F. Scott Fitzgerald: The Great Gatsby*. In his essay, Mizener positively discusses *The Great Gatsby* and offers ways to further explore and analyze its themes. Mizener's article does provide a brief description of Daisy's role and character within the novel:

But he could not repeat the past with Daisy, changed by her momentary passion for Tom at the time of their marriage and corrupted all her life by her dependence on the protection of wealth and the conventions of wealthy life which have preserved and heightened her beauty, until in the end she let Gatsby die for the murder she has committed. (49)

This segment from Mizener's article illustrates that he viewed Daisy as a weak and dependent character. Daisy is presented in a "stereotypically" female manner where she is the weaker sex needing "protection" in the forms of wealth. Daisy is also presented as unintelligent. This idea is suggested when Mizener mentions her "momentary passion" for Tom. Additionally, Mizener's opinions suggest that Daisy was not beautiful. To Mizener, Daisy was only beautiful because of her wealth, which "preserved" and "heightened" her charm. Mizener blames Daisy's sex, because it has made her weak, promoting her cruel behavior. From this perspective, it can be suggested that Mizener believes it is Daisy's weak character that permits her to allow Gatsby to take the blame for Myrtle's death. Overall, Mizener's opinion is one of the times, where a woman's sex has labeled her as weak and enabled others to take the blame for her fall.

## 1950s

During the 1950s, the revival of *The Great Gatsby* continued. Numerous Gatsby essays were written; however, many of the essays provided a negative picture of Daisy. Several critics who wrote essays that maligned Daisy's character included Marius Bewley and Robert Ornstein. Other critics such as R.W. Stallman and James Henry Raleigh wrote essays which discredited Daisy's beauty and significance in the novel.

Marius Bewley's essay, "Scott Fitzgerald's Criticism of America", published in the *Sewanee Review* in 1954, discusses Gatsby's heightened stature as a mythical character while attacking Daisy Buchanan. Bewley describes Daisy as "vicious emptiness," and "moral indifference (59)." These words illustrate Daisy as a cold and cruel character. Bewley continues to describe how Daisy fails "to represent the objective correlative of Gatsby's vision (59)." These derogatory comments glorify Jay Gatsby, while slandering Daisy's character. Bewley's outright negative comments demonstrate his dislike of Daisy's character. As a result, Bewley's vulgar language paints a picture of a cold, monstrous Daisy, who is a failure in comparison to the mythic Gatsby.

Robert Ornstein's essay, "Scott Fitzgerald's Fable of East and West," not only presents Daisy in a negative light, but also provides a disapproving commentary on *The Great Gatsby* as well. Ornstein's article was published in *College English* in 1956, and was reprinted in Mathew Brucoli's *F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby: A Literary Reference*. In this article, Ornstein degrades Daisy because of her sex. He uses a stereotypical, patriarchal picture to illustrate Daisy as a weak victim of the female gender:

Despite her facile cynicism and claim to sophistication, Daisy is still the "nice" girl who grew up in Louisville in a beautiful house with a wicker settee on the

porch. She remains “spotless,” still immaculately dressed in white and capable of a hundred whimsical vaporous enthusiasms. She has assimilated the urbane ethic of the East, which allows a bored wife a casual discreet affair. But she cannot, like Gatsby’s uninvited guests, wink at the sordid details of Gatsby’s career, she shrinks away; she never intended to leave her husband, but now even an affair is impossible. (267)

In comparison to Bewley’s article, Ornstein insults Daisy through her sex. To Ornstein, it is Daisy’s “immaculate” femininity, which causes her to “shrink” away from Gatsby.

This quote suggests that Ornstein viewed femininity as a sign of weakness, dependence, and naiveté. He presents Daisy in this stereotypical fashion, demonstrating her weakness and lack of intelligence to the world around her. It is this lack of intelligence that causes her to need protection from Tom Buchanan instead of Jay Gatsby. Ornstein establishes Daisy as a helpless victim of her womanhood, which has caused her to “shrink” from Gatsby’s criminal career. Ultimately, Ornstein views Daisy as blameless of her actions because she was a member of the weaker sex.

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Similar to Ornstein’s article, R. W. Stallman’s essay, “Gatsby and the Hole in Time,” (1955) provides a negative interpretation of *The Great Gatsby*. Saving little room for Daisy, Stallman says, “Everybody is maimed, physically, or spiritually. Not one woman is without some physical imperfection, not even Daisy is beautiful” (65).

Stallman’s brief comment about Daisy does not malign her character, but it does not glorify her either. Instead of looking at Daisy’s character holistically, Stallman only mentions her lack of physical beauty. This simple statement degrades Daisy’s character and significance to the novel. In a review written by James Henry Raleigh entitled



“F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby*: Legendary Bases and Allegorical Significances,” (1957) a positive opinion of Gatsby and Nick is presented; however, the other characters are found meaningless. “At this level, too, most people don’t count; they are merely a higher form of animality living out its mundane existence: the Tom Buchanans, the Jordan Bakers, the Daisy Fays. Only Nick and Gatsby count” (270). Similar to Stallman’s comment, Raleigh states that Daisy’s role in the novel is insignificant. What worse damage can one do than render Daisy’s role as meaningless?

## 1960s

Acclaim for *The Great Gatsby* continued in England and the United States during the 1960s. Due to its acclaim, critics stopped arguing for *Gatsby*’s approval, and instead focused upon a fuller examination of the text. In this section, we will look at three writers: J. S. Westbrook, Henry Dan Piper, and Leslie A. Fiedler. Among these writers, Leslie A. Fiedler’s novel, *Love and Death in the American Novel*, extensively elaborates upon Daisy’s role within the text as compared to the other critics we have examined. A feminist and iconoclastic piece, Fiedler’s text functions as a gateway for research on women and sexuality.

J. S. Westbrook’s essay, “Nature and Optics in *The Great Gatsby*,” appeared in *American Literature* in 1960. This essay was reprinted in Nicolas Tredell’s research guide, *Columbia Critical Guides: F. Scott Fitzgerald’s The Great Gatsby* (1997). In this essay, Westbrook establishes how nature, optical motifs, color, and flower symbolism operate within the text. In relation to flower symbolism, Westbrook discusses how Daisy’s name and history has been “spelled out in orchids and roses”(77). Unlike the critics we have examined earlier, Westbrook does not negatively comment on Daisy’s

character, but instead studies her from the realm of flowers. Daisy's connection to flowers is an interesting topic, which will later be revisited by Glenn Settle in his 1985 article, "Fitzgerald's Daisy: The Siren Voice." As a result, Westbrook's essay enables readers and critics to study the *Gatsby* from a new perspective.

Unlike Westbrook's essay, Henry Dan Piper's book, *F. Scott Fitzgerald: A Critical Portrait* (1965), is a biographical sketch of Fitzgerald's life interweaved with his writings. Piper begins his book by describing the short story and writing efforts made by Fitzgerald, which would later assist in the development of *The Great Gatsby*. Three chapters are devoted to *The Great Gatsby* demonstrating Fitzgerald's diligence in developing a proper theme, hero, and form for his novel. In Daisy's defense, Piper spends very little time elaborating upon her character. However in relation to Daisy's role within *The Great Gatsby*, Piper does inform readers how "Gatsby, like Fitzgerald wants it both ways":

Gatsby, like Fitzgerald, wants it both ways. He must be a Grail Knight as well as a Wall Street Tycoon. He expects Daisy to be the innocent maiden in distress waiting stoically for her knight-errant. At the same time he insists that she be a typical 'popular' girl—rich, pretty, and consequently self-centered and unadventurous.(124)

Piper's comment connects Gatsby, Fitzgerald, and Daisy, by saying they each play a dual role in life and in the world of the novel. Piper's suggestion that the three are connected is an idea, which will be explored further in later research of *The Great Gatsby*. For example, Daisy's connection to Gatsby is further explored in Leland Person's article, "Herstory' and Daisy Buchanan" which was published in 1978. In his essay, Person

discusses Daisy's dual role as Gatsby's female double. "At the same time that she exists as the ideal object of Gatsby's quest, in other words, Daisy becomes his female double. She is both anima and Doppelganger, and *The Great Gatsby* is finally the story of the failure of a mutual dream" (251). Thus, one can see how Piper's early ideas on *The Great Gatsby* and Daisy will fuel later research.

Fiedler's critical study, *Love and Death in the American Novel*, was published in 1967. In a chapter entitled, "The Revenge on Women," Fiedler focuses upon the depiction of women and in particular, Daisy Buchanan. Despite the numerous critics who wrote on *The Great Gatsby* and Daisy, Fiedler's highly feminist article provides an ardent account of Daisy in terms of her sexuality and womanhood. In this book, Fiedler broke from the mold of previous research and argued for new ideas that had not been seen in the realm of critical research. For instance, Fiedler explains how within each woman is both a "Fair Maiden" and a "Dark Lady." Fiedler also describes the blurring of genders that occurs within Fitzgerald's novel. "Thematically, archetypally, even such chief male protagonists as Gatsby and Dick Diver are females (101)" says Fiedler. His comments highlight two motifs that exist in Fitzgerald's novel: duality and the altering of genders, which will both be topics explored in my research. For example, Frances Kerr's article, "Feeling 'Half-Feminine': Modernism and Politics of Emotion in *The Great Gatsby*," discusses numerous examples which suggest Gatsby and Nick's femininity as compared to masculinity.

## The Basil Stories: 1945-1960

In 1928, Fitzgerald began writing the Basil stories, which later developed into a series of nine stories about a male adolescent named Basil Duke Lee. Fitzgerald regressed into his childhood experiences in St. Paul, Minnesota and made them the focus of his series. Unlike his novels, *The Saturday Evening Post* published eight of the nine stories between April 28, 1928 and April 27, 1929. "That Kind of Party" was the one story rejected by the *Post*. This story did not appear in print until Arthur Mizener published it in 1951 in the *Princeton University Library Chronicle*. In 1935, Fitzgerald published *Taps at Reveille*, which included only five of the Basil stories: "The Scandal Detectives," "The Freshest Boy," "He Thinks He's Wonderful," "The Captured Shadow," and "The Perfect Life." The three additional stories "A Night at the Fair," "Forging Ahead," and "Basil and Cleopatra," were later reprinted in Arthur Mizener's *Afternoon of an Author*, 1957. Fitzgerald never made the Basil series available to readers as a book. It was not until after his death that Jackson R. Bryer and John Kuehl published the series as a distinct unit in 1973.

Unlike *The Great Gatsby*, very little research was published on the Basil stories during 1945-1960. Arthur Mizener and Malcolm Cowley, who each published a book containing several of Fitzgerald's stories, made some of the few comments available on the series. These comments primarily focused on the highly autobiographical content found in the Basil stories. Aside from Mizener and Cowley's books, Henry Dan Piper discussed the autobiographical content in the stories as well. Lengthy critical articles dedicated to the series were not written.

In 1951, Malcolm Cowley published *The Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, which contained a selection of 28 stories. Out of these 28 stories, three stories “The Scandal Detectives,” “The Freshest Boy,” and “The Captured Shadow,” appeared from the Basil series. In Cowley’s “Retrospective,” he describes how Fitzgerald “relived his childhood,” in the Basil stories. Figuratively speaking, he mentions how Fitzgerald is Basil Duke Lee and the characters Riply Buckner, Hubert Blair, and Bill Kemf were in life Cecil Reid, Paul Ballion, and Reuben Warner. He discusses how the St. Regis School represented the Newman School, which Fitzgerald attended. Cowley explains why he included “The Captured Shadow,” “The Freshest Boy,” and “The Scandal Detectives,” in the following quote:

I have included three of the revised stories in the present group “The Captured Shadow” is by far the best, for its self-portrait of a writer at the beginning of his career, but “The Freshest Boy” is a minor classic of prep-school life and “The Scandal Detectives” contains a fine picture of the children gathering in the Wharton’s yard ‘for the soft and romantic time before supper.’ (308)

Cowley’s comments demonstrate that those who read Fitzgerald’s Basil stories looked at the series as an autobiographical commentary on Fitzgerald and his adolescent experiences. Additionally, Cowley’s remarks are light and lack serious critical investigation of the characters.

In 1957, Arthur Mizener published *An Afternoon with an Author*, where he included three stories from the Basil stories. Mizener’s book contains an introduction with opening remarks before each story. The three stories included were “A Night at the Fair,” “Forging Ahead,” and “Basil and Cleopatra.” Interestingly, these three stories were

not included in Cowley's selection of stories. In Mizener's introduction, he describes Fitzgerald's difficulty as a writer and how many people tried to convince him to take the nine Basil tales and make them available to readers in a book. According to Mizener, Fitzgerald refused to make them available as a book because "some queer anxiety about becoming like Booth Tarkington" (7). Booth Tarkington was another writer of the time and Fitzgerald did not want to be associated to him through the Basil series. Before each of the stories, Mizener makes remarks pointing out the stories connection to Fitzgerald's life. In his opening remarks to "Basil and Cleopatra," he mentions Basil's feelings for Minnie Bibble as resembling Fitzgerald's feelings for Ginevra King. Minnie Bibble is the only female Mizener mentions in his remarks.

In 1965, Henry Dan Piper published *F. Scott Fitzgerald: A Critical Portrait*. In his book, Piper mentions Cowley and Mizener's books and argues that Basil Duke Lee not only resembled Fitzgerald's childhood experiences, but also resembled Tarkington's protagonist, Penrod. Piper discusses how many of Basil's adventures were already described in Fitzgerald's short story, "The Romantic Egotist." Piper states that Fitzgerald's first stories were well written; however, "Forging Ahead," and "Basil and Cleopatra," were "strained and unconvincing" (174). He also states how the story, "That Kind of Party," was "so bad that no one would buy it" (174). Similar to Cowley and Mizener's books, Piper does not elaborate upon the Basil series or the characters in it. The female characters are not mentioned. Thus, the research that had been written on the Basil stories focused upon Basil Duke Lee and his autobiographical connection to Fitzgerald.

## 1985-2000-A New Look at Daisy Buchanan

Research on *The Great Gatsby* and Fitzgerald's infamous Daisy Buchanan continued during 1985-2000. Daisy's importance is exhibited in the titles and chapters of essays and books that are devoted to her. Critical research studied Daisy from a Feminist, Formalist, Marxist, Cultural, and New Historicist approach. She was not just mentioned in articles as in the past, she was now becoming a focus. Overall, research on Daisy was intelligent and positive. However, research on Daisy is still slim in comparison to research on *The Great Gatsby*. In this section, we will be looking at critics who viewed Daisy as an important character to be examined and interpreted from *The Great Gatsby*. Each critic provides new insight into Daisy's personality and purpose. These critics include: Glenn Settle, Carol Wershoven, Ronal Berman, and Mathew Bruccoli. Ultimately, these specific critics helped further my particular argument on Daisy.

Glenn Settle's essay, "Fitzgerald's Daisy: The Siren Voice," appeared in the *American Literature* in March 1985. A highly feminist and interpretative article, Settle's vivid language presents Daisy as a powerful character. Drawing upon Greek mythology, Settle demonstrates Daisy as classical Siren. He describes how many critics have found that Daisy's voice is "full of money" (115) and have argued that this is an essential element in her characterization. In response to this past research, Settle believes Daisy's alluring voice illustrates her classical role. Settle shows how Nick Carraway's story presents Jay Gatsby, as Odysseus, an epic hero on a quest further fueling Daisy as siren. Settle further argues Daisy as classical Siren by demonstrating her relationship to the archetypal femme fatale.

One of the reasons for Settle's argument stems from Daisy's voice. To Settle, as to many other critics, Daisy's voice is monumental in unlocking her character. Settle describes Daisy's voice as persuasive, performed, enchanting, romantic, and beautiful. In particular, Settle suggests the persuasive quality of Daisy's "performed" speeches, alluding to her role as actress:

Daisy performs each speech, Nick suggests in his commentary, as creative musical production, arranging, composing her inspiration in such a way that one has the feeling, in listening, of being an audience of one, spellbound in a performance that shall never be heard again [...] Later within the scene Nick also says "her voice compelled me forward" (p.14) and, again, it "compel [led] my attention." (120)

As Settle's quote highlights, Daisy's voice and mannerisms demonstrate how each action she makes was precisely performed for a particular audience. As a result of Settle's reading of Daisy, readers and researchers alike have an in-depth and critically interpretative article further exploring her purpose and character. I particularly enjoyed Settle's essay, because his ideas and opinions on Daisy resemble my own. I liked how he exhibited Daisy as powerful through her depiction as siren, while incorporating Greek mythology, allusions, symbolism, and imagery to further his argument.

Carol Wershoven's essay, "Insatiable Girls," appeared in the book *Child Brides and Intruders* in 1993. Drawing upon the power of money within the novel, Wershoven argues that Daisy is a child bride. Wershoven indicates that Daisy's marriage to Tom is representative of her role as property purchased and bought in a country supporting patriarchal and capitalistic ideals. From this perspective, Wershoven paints a picture of



Daisy as property, object or “prize,” who is not a person but instead a “thing.” To Wershoven, at the heart of *The Great Gatsby*, are trading, buying, and selling represented in the symbolic “trade” of Daisy. As a child bride, Wershoven believes that Daisy is an “icon of desire and damnation” (92). Men will want Daisy, work to get her, and later protect her from the mistakes she makes as a child bride.

Wershoven also discusses Fitzgerald’s reasoning for creating a novel that is powered by money. Drawing upon autobiographical encounters, Wershoven describes how Zelda broke her engagement with Fitzgerald when he lacked financial stability, and how it was not until he became wealthy that she agreed to marry him. Fitzgerald’s rejection and later reunion proved that money could buy a woman. Thus, Fitzgerald believed money could buy possessions and women were one of these possessions. Wershoven mentions how Fitzgerald’s opinion of women can be seen in Jay Gatsby, who also believes he can buy Daisy through money. I particularly enjoyed Wershoven’s article because I share many of the same ideas on Fitzgerald’s Daisy. I, too, believe that Fitzgerald’s personal encounters with women helped shape his attitude and depiction of Daisy Buchanan.

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Ronald Berman’s critical study, *The Great Gatsby and Modern Times*, was written in 1994. In his book, Berman compares the cultural milieu found in *The Great Gatsby* with the tastes and values found in contemporary society. Berman believes the cultural aspects Fitzgerald includes in his novel such as newspapers, magazines, billboards, and Hollywood allusions make *The Great Gatsby* a classic and modern text. Despite dedicating most of his time to discussing the cultural elements of *The Great Gatsby*, Berman provides a distinct picture of Daisy’s character and purpose.

In his chapter *Seeing Yourself*, Berman pictures Daisy as theatrical in nature, acting and performing gestures. From this standpoint, Daisy “shows” or performs certain behaviors for her audience without feeling any emotional connection. Drawing upon Hollywood allusions, Berman believes Daisy prefers Hollywood where actresses use gesture, pose, and avoid “direct sexual feeling.” Berman describes how Daisy is fascinated with Hollywood culture, using it as an ill-fit model for human relationships. In Hollywood movies, relationships are enacted through the demonstration of gestures. These acted gestures are not one’s true feelings, because it is just an act (113-117). Berman presents Daisy as a Hollywood actress reading a “script” that “has no human complications” and makes “no emotional demands on a personality that resists them”(121).

Additionally Berman’s chapter *Seeing Yourself*, discusses the myriad roles Daisy holds within the context of the novel. Several of these roles include Daisy as long-suffering but loyal wife, a good cousin, a glamour girl, and a devoted mother (121-122). Daisy is “willing to adapt her sense of self,” because she understands what men want in a woman. Berman asserts, “we can surmise that the nature of women from 1921 to 1924 was understood ideally to be instinctive rather than intelligent, charming rather than decisive” (129). Daisy understands the role she must play and uses it to her advantage; however, by doing so, she surrenders her will:

Daisy understands all this and can to a certain extent make it work for her.[...]

Why bother to endure conflict between self and role? Better to adjust self to role than the other way around. If women are expected to play-act for a good life, then perhaps they should become what they enact. And this essentially is what Daisy

does, losing incrementally the demands of her own will and adopting protective coloration. (129)

Berman's depiction of Daisy is one of an intelligent actress posing, performing, and playing an array of roles for her own advantage. Even though Daisy's "adapting" personality provides her with benefits, there are disadvantages to her character as well. By playing roles, Berman believes Daisy becomes them, sacrificing her true self and intentions. Berman's interpretation of Daisy's character provides readers with new material to investigate and research. Again, I find a great deal of truth in Berman's interpretation of Daisy. She is an intelligent actress, who manipulates the patriarchal system by playing numerous stereotypical female roles. However, the question remains, what is the price of Daisy's role-playing? And if it is a loss of self, is it worth it?

Mathew Bruccoli's book *F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby: A Literary Reference* presents historical and autobiographical information about F. Scott Fitzgerald and *The Great Gatsby*. Tracing the life of Fitzgerald and *The Great Gatsby*, Bruccoli divides his book into the following sections: Chronology, Brief life, Background of *The Great Gatsby*, Writing *The Great Gatsby*, Reception of *The Great Gatsby*, and the Reputation of *The Great Gatsby* today. In regard to Daisy, Bruccoli discusses her similarity to Fitzgerald's real-life first love, Ginevra King. Bruccoli provides a brief background on Ginevra and her relationship with Fitzgerald. He explains how Ginevra King came from a wealthy family, who did not accept F. Scott Fitzgerald as a husband because of his lack of money. Ginevra dated Fitzgerald until she broke off their relationship in 1917. She later went on to marry William Mitchell, who came from a wealthy family connected to Chicago banking. After Fitzgerald's relationship ended "he

came away from Ginevra with a sense of social inadequacy, a deep hurt, and longing for the girl beyond attainment” (10). These feelings can later be seen in *The Great Gatsby*.

Brucoli notes that much of Ginevra King went into Fitzgerald’s conception of Daisy Fay (10). Brucoli believes that not only is Ginevra seen in Daisy’s character, but in Judy Jones from “Winter Dreams” as well. In both texts, Brucoli asserts that Judy and Daisy like Ginevra represent the unattainable woman. As unattainable female, she not only scarred F. Scott Fitzgerald, but also scarred his male characters. Brucoli describes the pain Fitzgerald felt from the loss of Ginevra: “It was the wound over Ginevra that never healed. Fitzgerald kept all of Ginevra’s letters to the end of his life. He even had them typed up and bound in a volume that runs 227 pages”(10). Brucoli continues to elaborate upon Fitzgerald’s feelings for Ginevra as a motive for writing *The Great Gatsby*:

As Daisy was the source of Gatsby’s ideal beauty, Ginevra King was the source of Fitzgerald’s. In October of 1937, when he was writing for Hollywood

Fitzgerald went up to Santa Barbara to see Ginevra who was there on visit. He was overcome with fear because ‘She was the first woman he ever loved and I have faithfully avoided seeing her up to this moment to keep that illusion perfect.’

Fitzgerald saw the need for a “perfect illusion” as part of the creative impulse.

[...] Not only did Ginevra King go into *The Great Gatsby*; she was in many ways part of Fitzgerald’s motive for writing the novel in the first place. (11)

Brucoli’s quote highlights Ginevra King’s crucial involvement in the creation of Daisy and *The Great Gatsby*. Brucoli’s historical background of Ginevra King and belief that she played a significant role in the conceptualization of Daisy Buchanan and

Judy Jones is very important to my specific argument. Bruccoli's belief that two female characters have been shaped by Ginevra furthers my argument, which asserts that one image or muse has shaped many of Fitzgerald's females. Fitzgerald has a distinct female personality in mind, which may very well be Ginevra King. Like a sculptor, Fitzgerald molds his female "clay" into the semblance of a distinct image essential to each female creation. Bruccoli's insight into Daisy's character is important because it provides readers with a new window into Fitzgerald's life, relationships, and craft.

### **1985-2000:Revisiting The Basil Stories**

During this time period, one would expect there to be a heightened interest in Fitzgerald's "neglected fiction." Since many critics have written on the *Gatsby*, why not investigate some his short fiction? Critics did not write essays on this series, because they believed it did not compare with Fitzgerald's *Gatsby* (Nagel, 267). References to the Basil stories were inserted into books and articles without being the primary focus. When the Basil stories were discussed in greater detail, they were included in books that examined many of Fitzgerald's stories (i.e. Alice Hall Petry's book, *Fitzgerald's Craft of Short Fiction: The Collected Stories-1920-1935* (1989) and *A Fortune Yet: Money in the Art of F. Scott Fitzgerald's Short Stories*-1991). Ultimately, the Basil stories continued to be overlooked in research as compared to *The Great Gatsby*.

Of particular significance, writer and critic Jackson R. Bryer gathered essays on Fitzgerald's short fiction in his book entitled, *New Essays on F. Scott Fitzgerald's Neglected Stories*, which was published in 1996. In his Introduction, Bryer stated that he hoped these essays would not be "the last word" on Fitzgerald's short fiction, but rather the "first words" for exploration into Fitzgerald's vast number of stories (1-6). Even

though Bryer's book provides a myriad of articles, only one of these articles was dedicated to the Basil stories.

James Nagel's essay, "Initiation and Intertextuality in *The Basil and Josephine Stories* (1996) highlights the critical research accumulated on this series while tracing the motifs of growth and the development of moral conscience in the characters Basil and Josephine. In regard to the series, Nagel believes the critical research on these stories has maintained a "sophisticated" level. However, he mentions how "the common assessment of Fitzgerald readers" is "these stories do not compare, artistically or thematically, with the best of the novels and short fiction but that nonetheless they reward close reading and contemplation" (267). Nagel outlines Basil and Josephine's growth and development, or lack thereof, in each of the stories by their particular encounters and circumstances. When discussing Basil's encounters with females, Nagel mentions Imogene Bissel, Ermine Bibble, better known as Minnie, and Jobena Dorsey. However, he does not elaborate on their role or purpose within the stories. He, instead, mentions them in terms of a narrative synopsis of events. Like Bryer's earlier comments, Nagel's concluding remarks note how "the stories of Basil and Josephine constitute a short story cycle that deserves renewed attention as a work of psychological subtlety and intensity, if not of polished artistry, and they should be considered worthy components of the Fitzgerald canon"(290).

## **Concluding Remarks**

More research and attention should be devoted to both Fitzgerald's Basil stories and his female characters. From my close reading of critical research, I have become more confident in my knowledge and understanding of Fitzgerald and his works. I am

disappointed that so little research has focused upon Fitzgerald's females. Therefore, my research will focus on his female characters and will offer readers not only an analysis of their purpose within the story/novel, but also on their essential importance to Fitzgerald.

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## Part II: Fitzgerald's Female

*"How could that raw temperament appreciate that she was one of the immortal sirens of the world?"* (183) –Basil (The Basil Stories)

F. Scott Fitzgerald

### Reading Beyond the Male Protagonist

Fitzgerald's *The Basil stories* is a compilation of nine short tales tracing the adolescent events of male protagonist, Basil Duke Lee, from ages eleven through seventeen. These stories are set in Fitzgerald's hometown of St. Paul, Minnesota. As a series, Fitzgerald highlights the trials and tribulations of his young, teen Basil Duke Lee. In these tales, readers and writers alike are provided with a glimpse into Basil's teenage world permeating with kissing games, dances, state fairs, and football. Despite Basil's important role, a deeper understanding of Fitzgerald and his female characters can be found in these rather short stories. My argument will move away from the traditional study of the male protagonist and instead focus upon the female characters.

Even though my study will not concentrate on Basil, it is important to recall Leslie Fiedler's critical study, *Love and Death in the American Novel* in terms of Fitzgerald's psychology, craft, and male characters. Leslie Fiedler describes how Fitzgerald's males are "females" (101). In addition to Fiedler's argument, Frances Kerr's article, "Feeling 'Half Feminine': Modernism and Emotion in *The Great Gatsby*" describes how Fitzgerald, Nick Carraway, and Jay Gatsby's are "half feminine." Drawing upon H. L. Mencken's comment, Gatsby is a "clown" and "he is a man who seems like a woman," Kerr explores how Fitzgerald formulates characters who "assert

masculinity but confess femininity” (409). In short, Kerr’s article highlights how Fitzgerald designed male characters, who break the traditional roles and personality traits assigned to the masculine gender. After reading both critics, there is room for research into Basil’s “feminine side.” More importantly, Fiedler and Kerr’s argument opens a door for research into Fitzgerald’s “half-masculine” female.

### **Introducing our Leading Ladies**

Numerous female characters make their way into Fitzgerald’s script for the Basil stories. The female characters studied within my argument include the following: Margaret Torrence, Imogene Bissel, Evelyn Beebe, Jobena Dorsey, and Erminine, better known as “Minnie,” Bibbie. In order to prove my argument, I will also include a character analysis of Daisy Buchanan from *The Great Gatsby*. In the upcoming sections, I will provide an in-depth character analysis of these females, illustrating their distinct yet similar personality traits. Additionally, I will address their dualistic nature by their ability to take on positive and negative personality traits. My research will show how Fitzgerald did not develop various female personalities within his works, but instead fashioned one distinct female personality. Thus, I will provide readers with a window into Fitzgerald’s artistic mind, where he repeatedly molded his “clay” into a specific female image that he admired, hated, and loved. I am unsure of the women, which stimulated Fitzgerald’s genius; however, her resurrected and repetitive appearance in his stories is a testimony of his timeless connection to her.

### **A Brief Sketch of the Fitzgeraldian Female**

As I have mentioned earlier, there are a myriad of traits, which are found within the Fitzgeraldian female. The most important include the following: resilience,

intelligence, indifference, beauty, sexual appeal, and danger. The reason Fitzgerald's female has these qualities stems from her drive to achieve power, money, and excellence. These particular traits will be studied throughout the character sketches found within my argument. The physical appearance of Fitzgerald's female is another important facet of her character, which should not be overlooked in a character sketch. Her appearance is particularly important because Fitzgerald spends ample time describing her looks. Fitzgerald does not explain his female in elaborate detail; however, he provides enough information to enable readers to formulate a picture of her in their mind.

What features does Fitzgerald admire in a woman? When reading Fitzgerald's short fiction and prose, it is evident that he admires a woman's face, smile, and voice. Fitzgerald not only admires these particular features, but also incorporates them in his writing to act as tools in understanding the nature of his female. Fitzgerald's use of features as a method of insight into his characters will be traced through a number of female characters including the following: Imogene Bissel, Jobena Dorsey, Minnie Bibble, and Daisy Fay-Buchanan.

The Fitzgeraldian female is driven by money and power, and she not only hopes to obtain money, but comes from familial wealth as well. A common thread that runs within Fitzgerald's books is that his females are wealthier than their male counterparts. This common motif will be seen in a number of the females included in my argument (e.g. Jobena Dorsey, Minnie Bibble, and Daisy-Fay Buchanan). This detail also shows Fitzgerald's personal pain at having less money than the woman he encountered in his past. This lack of money was a disadvantage, which ailed him and could only provide him with solace through its inclusion in his writing.

To further illustrate the importance of money and power, Fitzgerald's short fiction and prose contains many objects in particular, cars. Fitzgerald craftily pairs his females with cars for a reason. Through this pairing, Fitzgerald, whether consciously or subconsciously, illustrates his females as objects. Even though these females possess more money than their male counterparts, they are powerless when viewed as objects. From this perspective, Fitzgerald's female can be viewed as a beautiful object capable of being bought. This motif is overwhelmingly seen in the character of Daisy Fay-Buchanan. For example, Jay Gatsby illegally acquires money in order to later "buy" the beautiful Daisy. Thus, Fitzgerald's female may come from money and obtain power; however, remains powerless when viewed as an object. This pairing of motor vehicles and females will be further illustrated in my arguments through the following women: Margaret Torrence, Imogene Bissel, Jobena Dorsey, Minnie Bibble, and Daisy Fay.

Fitzgerald designed his female to be seen as a dynamic woman skilled in playing a multitude of roles. She not only plays the role of a mother and wife, but she also plays a myriad of stereotypical roles. Some of these roles include the "movie-star," "the blonde," "the southern belle," "the virgin," "the vixen," and "the baby." Many may see her ability to alter her personality as a sign of her insincerity. However, this is not the case. Her acting or role-playing is not insincere, but instead a sign of her power over the other characters. Additionally, her ability to play a number of roles makes her remarkably human. Most people "wear a mask" and alter their personality depending on the environment. Fitzgerald's female may take it a step further than the average human; however, it is this step which makes her an "Oscar-winning" actress. The quote, "Life is a stage," can be one we associate with the design of the Fitzgeraldian female.

Unfortunately, her playing of roles does have its disadvantages. For example, she continually acts, while sacrificing her sense of self. If she only plays roles, than what identity does she have? This lack of a sense of self may be one reason she seems indifferent and cruel at times. Thus, Fitzgerald's use of acting and role-playing as a trait in his female means his creation must be an actress.

As mentioned, Fitzgerald's female is dual in nature. This duality is seen in her two-sided personality where she has the ability to play a myriad of contradictory roles. These binary opposites are found within her character through the following illustrations: aggressive and passive, intelligent and foolish, sexual and reserved, powerful and powerless. Several contradictory symbolic stereotypes she exhibits include goddess yet ice-queen, vixen yet virgin, good girl and bad girl. By playing both roles, Fitzgerald's female becomes dangerous. These apparent contradictions make her both appealing and dangerous for those who surround her. Additionally, her dangerous nature means she is unable to remain constant further fueling her confused sense of self.

Unlike her dangerous nature, Fitzgerald's female is also highly intelligent. She knows how society sees woman and uses these stereotypes to her advantage. For example, she knows a woman is meant to be beautiful, bubbly, and charming. Because she knows this information, she craftily designs herself to fit the mold. For example, Fitzgerald's Daisy hopes her daughter will grow to be a "fool":

I woke up out of the ether with an utterly abandoned feeling and asked the nurse right away if it was a boy or a girl. She told me it was a girl, and so I turned my head away and wept. 'All right,' I said, ' I'm glad it's a girl. And I hope she'll be a fool—that's the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool.' (21)

Daisy tells her daughter she hopes she will be a fool, because she realizes that by playing the “fool” she has had many advantages. As I pointed out earlier, many readers and critics during the 1950s viewed Daisy as weak, naïve, and dependent on Tom Buchanan. Could this have been a misreading of her character? I believe so. Many critics may not have realized that they allowed Daisy Fay, the actress to get under their skin. 1950s critics believed in a false picture of Daisy because it was an act, it was just Daisy *pretending* to be the fool. Many readers may still find Daisy’s comment to her daughter as harsh or inappropriate. However, Daisy believed she was providing her daughter with the soundest advice or better yet, true words of wisdom. She knows men expect her to be pretty, bubbly, and unintelligent and this is what she gave them. She never lets them realize her intelligence, because she does not believe this is what men want. Interestingly, by playing the fool, Daisy controls the men that surround her. Ultimately, it is Fitzgerald’s male characters that are exposed as the fool.

### **Basil’s Girls**

“All the girls I’ve cared about are sort of the same.” (Basil)

The Basil stories provide readers with the distinct Fitzgeraldian female, which I have described above. Unlike Fitzgerald’s novels, which include one female protagonist, the Basil stories present a myriad of females ranging from ages eleven to seventeen. Due to the number of stories and progressive age of the protagonist, Fitzgerald provides Basil with a variety of females who assist in his growth and development. It is important to note that I will discuss each female in chronological order, illustrating Basil’s progression from early to late adolescence. Some of the most important female characters that Basil encounters are Margaret Torrence, Imogene Bissel, Evelyn Beebe, Jobena Dorsey, and



Minnie Bibbie. Many readers may believe that the female character who plays the greatest role within the stories is Minnie Bibbie. However, I will be looking at a myriad of females that Basil encounters in these tales, because of their commonality in personality. As I mentioned in the quote above, Basil, even believes all the girls he has loved are “sort of the same.”

### **Margaret Torrence**

We first meet Margaret Torrence (age thirteen) in the story, “The Scandal Detectives;” Fitzgerald skillfully uses sound to introduce Margaret and her friends Imogene Bissell, age twelve, and Connie Davis, age thirteen. As mentioned, Fitzgerald repeatedly incorporates sound to illustrate the importance of one’s voice within his short fiction and prose. Basil and his pal, Riply happen to come upon the girls singing “My Darling Clementine.” Basil notices Margaret “exaggeratedly” chewing gum, which he surmises means they had been smoking cigarettes. Margaret and her friends have stolen cigarettes from Mrs. Bissel. Margaret, as dangerous female, is first noticed through this risk-taking act. After this initial information is provided, the reader is told that Margaret is a part of “Basil’s recent past.” Even though Basil and Margaret have had an adolescent romantic past, he does not have feelings for her any longer. Instead, Basil is attracted to Imogene Bissel.

Because of Basil’s attraction to Imogene, he asks Margaret to return his school ring, which he has given to her as a sign of his affection. Margaret returns the ring to Basil, who hopes Imogene, will now accept it as well. To Basil’s dismay, Imogene is more interested in the illustrious, Hubert Blair. Margaret also admits her interest in Hubert Blair and tells Basil, “Hubert Blair is the nicest boy in town and you’re the most

conceited (25).” Margaret’s comment illustrates her bold character. Margaret does not have a problem with telling Basil what she thinks. She does not play the stereotypical “passive” girl, but instead speaks up for her opinions and lets Basil know that she does not approve of his behavior. Jobena Dorsey, another female we will later examine, is also bold and open to speaking her mind. As you will see, both Margaret and Jobena provide Basil with their opinions. Jobena, in particular, provides Basil with advice as well.

Margaret plays a small role in the stories as compared to the females we will discuss later. When Margaret is mentioned, she is paired with other female characters including Imogene Bissel, Connie Davis, and Gladys Schellinger. However in the story, “He Thinks He’s Wonderful,” Margaret plays a more significant role. In this tale, Margaret and Basil meet on a train returning to their hometown, St. Paul, Minnesota. Their simultaneous travel occurs because they are both returning West after completing a year of schooling East.

In this tale, Fitzgerald provides the reader with a picture of Margaret. He describes Margaret’s beauty, personality, and past relationship. The language Fitzgerald uses to describe Margaret shows that he designed her to correspond with his distinct female persona:

Margaret Torrence was fourteen: a serious girl, considered beautiful by some sort of tradition, for she had been beautiful as a little girl. A year and a half before, after a breathless struggle, Basil had succeeded in kissing her on the forehead. They met now with extraordinary joy; for a moment each of them to the other represented home, the blue skies of the past, the surmising afternoons ahead. (78)

As seen in this quote, Fitzgerald’s selected language enables readers to come a step closer

to understanding Margaret's appearance, personality, and past relationship to Basil. In terms of Margaret's appearance and personality, Fitzgerald describes her as a girl of intelligence and conventional beauty through the use of the words "serious" and "considered beautiful by some sort of tradition." Aside from Margaret's intelligence and beauty, Fitzgerald describes her in terms of power as well. Margaret can be seen as powerful, because Fitzgerald portrays her as a comforting reminder to Basil of his past and home. As a reminder, Margaret symbolically represents Basil's childhood and innocence. Margaret and Basil's "breathless struggle" is a sign of this innocence. Margaret's connection to Basil's nostalgic age of innocence is an indicator of her timeless reminder to him of his home and first relationship with a female. Thus, Margaret is an infinitely powerful reminder to Basil of his childhood years.

While on the train ride, Margaret notices a change in Basil, which she identifies as a "charming sadness." After Margaret notices this change in Basil, Fitzgerald expands upon her character by revealing, "she was of the grave, conscientious type who sometimes loved him and whose love he could never return—and she could scarcely wait to tell people how attractive he had grown (78)." This comment not only provides insight into Margaret's character, but also addresses Basil's feelings as well. Fitzgerald's description suggests that Basil sees Margaret as "the grave, conscientious type," "whose love he could never return." Fitzgerald's selected language indicates that even though Margaret may love Basil, he is incapable of returning that love. This particular comment connects Margaret to Jay Gatsby and Daisy Buchanan, who also loved but did not receive the love they sought in return. Additionally, Basil's inability to love Margaret connects her to Fitzgerald as well, who loved and was not loved in return. Fitzgerald's personal pain

would have enabled him first hand to indirectly channel his suffering through his characters. Following the pattern of the Fitzgeraldian female, this scene demonstrates Margaret's powerless. Margaret as a powerful and powerless female further suggests her dual nature. Despite Basil's inability to love Margaret, he acknowledges her beauty. While on the train, Basil becomes aware of how, "the light inside the car fell on her young face." He then says, "You know something? You know you're the prettiest girl in the city (79)?" This comment, yet again, reveals that Margaret has the ability to be both a powerful and powerless female, demonstrating Fitzgerald's use of duality within the text.

Later in this story, Fitzgerald tells readers what Margaret values. While on the train ride, Margaret and Basil engage in conversation. Quickly, readers notice the triviality of the conversation. Fitzgerald does not describe a discussion about their school year or personal well-being. Fitzgerald instead presents a conversation, which focuses upon materialism:

They talked of people they knew, of where they had gone for Easter vacation, of the plays they had seen in New York.

'Basil, we're going to get an automobile,' she said, 'and I'm going to learn how to drive.'

That's fine.' He wondered if his grandfather would let him drive the electric sometimes this summer. (79)

Fitzgerald's language suggests that Margaret values material items, possessions, and accomplishments. It can be suggested that Margaret believes material items, like automobiles, demonstrate one's success. Margaret does not ask Basil about his year at the St. Regis School. Readers recall Basil's difficulty in making friends at the St. Regis

School. Readers may even recall the tears Basil shed when he made few friends and was labeled, "The Freshest Boy." Basil does not discuss this information with Margaret nor does Margaret ask him. Instead they discuss topics of materialism, which indicates that they value money, power, and success. This scenario explains how Margaret and Basil are more interested in where they went on vacation, rather than their personal well-being. Even though Basil clings to Margaret as a reminder of his past, they both care little for discussion which does not pertain to material accomplishments or personal gain.

Later in this quote, Margaret tells Basil that her parents are "going to get an automobile." This comment suggests that Margaret views cars as objects that represent success, money, and power. Margaret's mention of her parents' automobile demonstrates her power over Basil, whose family does not have an automobile. As I mentioned earlier, many of Fitzgerald's females possess more wealth than their male counterparts, as we can see with Margaret and Basil. Additionally, Fitzgerald's lack of finances would connect him with Basil and further fuel his personal pain, where Margaret like Ginevra King had more wealth than Fitzgerald. Moreover, the car as a symbol of success and money is a prevalent theme addressed in Fitzgerald's short fiction and prose. Margaret and several other female characters contained in the Basil stories will take an interest in cars. Interestingly, Margaret is not the only one who views cars as a symbol of status, success, and power. Basil also hopes to get his hands on his grandpa's "electric." Ultimately, men and women of the twentieth century like today view cars as a cultural symbol of status and success.

In addition to representing Basil's past, Margaret represents the materialistic consumer. This idea is addressed in Mary McAleer Balkun's article, "One Cannot Both

Spend and Have': The Economics of Gender in the Josephine Stories." Even though her article focuses upon Fitzgerald's series, the Josephine stories, her ideas are relevant and applicable to Margaret's character. Balkun's article describes the changing role of women during the 1920's because of the focus upon material culture. Balkun provides pertinent information pertaining to the theories of sexual economics, which sheds light upon Margaret's role within the Basil stories:

Josephine's experience is cast in economic terms first and foremost, so that she emerges as a remarkable example of the "sexuo-economic relation" described by Gilman (121), one in which a woman's success and "personal profit" are intrinsically tied to her ability "to win and hold the other sex" (63), and the effects of that relation. According to Gilman, women are forced into the role of consumers, "always to take and never to think of giving anything in return except their womanhood. (124)

Similar to Fitzgerald's Josephine, Margaret recognizes the important role of material objects in society. She views the possession of material objects as future indicators of her success and attainment of social mobility. Even though Margaret is a fourteen-year old adolescent, she understands that to profit from this world she must use her beauty and gender to obtain material objects. It is clear that Margaret understands what a woman represents in society. Intelligently, she has decided to use this knowledge in order to gain profit in this world. From this perspective, Margaret's interest in her personal well-being demonstrates her as a powerful female. However, Margaret can also be viewed as a powerless female. According to this reading, to obtain status, she must "sell" herself and be viewed as economically dependent on men. Balkun states "she is a

consumer, rather than a producer, economically dependent, and ultimately, a commodity (122).” Balkun’s article enables readers to see Margaret as object. Similar to Josephine, Margaret is only capable of gaining status through her beauty and appeal to men. In essence, Margaret will need to sell her product (herself) in order to obtain wealth, power, and class in 20<sup>th</sup> century America.

Margaret as powerless female, object, and commodity is further seen through Fitzgerald’s textual placement. Ironically, Fitzgerald craftily has Margaret discuss automobiles to symbolically reveal her role as an object. This connection suggests that Fitzgerald sees both females and cars as prized objects and/or possessions, which bring status and wealth. To Fitzgerald, both cars and women are beautiful and can be bought. Fitzgerald’s personal relationship with Zelda Sayre proves that women can be bought with money. Additionally, Gatsby also attempts to “buy” Daisy Fay-Buchanan with his money. From another perspective, Fitzgerald pairs women and cars to demonstrate that women view men as objects. Since Fitzgerald’s female is intent on her own personal gain why wouldn’t she view men as objects? Fitzgerald may be saying not only do men see women as objects, but women also see men as objects. When looking back at Margaret’s intricate role within the text, we see Fitzgerald’s pattern of traits exhibiting his distinct female persona. Fitzgerald’s Margaret also plays a dual role within the text, because ultimately, she is both powerful and powerless it all depends on the reader’s perception.

## **Imogene Bissel**

Imogene Bissel is first introduced to readers in the story, “The Scandal Detectives.” Basil and Imogene’s childhood relationship is illustrated in the stories, “The Scandal Detectives” and “He Thinks He’s Wonderful.” Readers are told that Imogene is

twelve-years old and has just returned from a year in Europe. This piece of information indicates that Imogene's family is successful and wealthy. Only a wealthy twelve-year-old girl would have just returned from a year in Europe. As we have already seen, belonging to a wealthy family is a common thread found in Fitzgerald's fiction and females. Readers must question what is Fitzgerald's purpose for creating a female who comes from money, especially since his male characters do not. One reason Fitzgerald may have developed stories with male characters that did not come from money, stems from his own lack of finances. He may have incorporated his lack of money into his writing to act as a form of therapy or catharsis.

In the tale, "The Scandal Detectives," we first meet Imogene Bissel, Margaret Torrence, and Connie Davis. These girls invite Basil and his pal, Riply, to come down to the Wharton's yard. (The Wharton's yard is a hangout where young children meet and gather together.) At this point, Basil rides his bike over to Imogene. Imogene studies Basil and notices, "something in his face then must have attracted her, for she looked up at him, looked at him really, and slowly smiled (20)." This quote is important, because Fitzgerald provides readers with insight into Imogene's role within the text.

When inspecting this quote, it is evident that Fitzgerald illustrates Imogene as an actress. Imogene as an actress is seen in her ability to "slowly" smile showing that it was planned and further, acted. Ronald Berman's critical study, *The Great Gatsby and Modern Times*, discusses how several of the main characters found in *The Great Gatsby*, act out roles, while appearing as if they are reading a script. In particular, Berman's book provides material suggesting that Daisy Buchanan's personality is based upon the role of acting and the use of gesture (113-129). Even though Berman's reading of Fitzgerald's



characters focuses upon Daisy and *The Great Gatsby*, it can be applied to Imogene. When Imogene “slowly” smiles and poses for Basil’s “camera” eyes she cannot only be viewed as an actress but also a model, because a model understands the importance of eye contact and holding a pose. Women such as Evelyn Beebe, Minnie Bibble, and Daisy Buchanan will later make their way into Fitzgerald’s scripts playing the role of an actress.

Imogene’s most important traits are her vitality and beauty. Fitzgerald makes it apparent to readers that Imogene is a “belle” who captivates men through these two traits. It is these two qualities, which make her resilient. Fitzgerald may vividly describe her face, eyes, and mouth; however, the focal point of her appearance is her smile. It is this smile, which illuminates her vitality and beauty. When Basil notices Imogene he is placed under her “spell”:

Something in his face then must have attracted her, for she looked up at him, looked at him really, and slowly smiled. She was to be a beauty and belle of many proms in a few years. Now her large brown eyes and large beautifully shaped mouth and the high flush over her thin cheek bones made her face gnome-like and offended those who wanted a child to look like a child. For a moment Basil was granted an insight into the future, and the spell of her vitality crept over him suddenly. For the first time in his life he realized a girl completely as something opposite and complementary to him and he was subject to a warm chill of mingled pleasure and pain. The summer afternoon became lost in her suddenly—the soft air, the shadowy hedges and banks of flowers the orange sunlight, the laughter and the voices, the tinkle of a piano over the way—the odor left all these

things and went into Imogene's face as she sat there looking up at him with a smile. (20)

In this quote, Fitzgerald's selected language not only indicates Imogene's beauty and vitality, but also demonstrates her power over Basil. Fitzgerald's choice of the word "spell" suggests that Imogene has a mystical power enabling her to captivate Basil by her smile. Imogene's ability to place Basil under a spell is evident when he forgets his surroundings, "the summer afternoon became lost in her suddenly. Additionally, Imogene's bewitching power places Basil in a trance where he can be viewed as drugged by her captivating smile. From this reading, Imogene's smile can be viewed as a drug that causes Basil to lose track of his surroundings and fall into a dreamland with Imogene as his focus.

This particular quote reveals more than just Imogene's bewitching smile. Fitzgerald's choice in words such as "spell," and "gnome-like," show his interest in using magical language to describe the persona of Imogene. His crafted language, therefore calls upon the fairyland of witches, sprites, and oracles. Through his use of magical imagery, Fitzgerald's Imogene can be viewed as a witch, sprite, and oracle further demonstrating her power over Basil. Magical entities such as witches, sprites, and oracles suggest power because they are immortal, enchanting, dangerous, and psychic. For example, Imogene as witch is conveyed through Fitzgerald's use of the word, "spell." As a witch, Imogene is provided with a supernatural ability to create spells and bewitch mortals. Additionally, Imogene can be viewed as a powerful sprite, because Fitzgerald describes her face as "gnome-like." (A synonym for gnome is an elf, sprite, or fairy). Imogene as an oracle is suggested when Basil says that for a moment "he was granted an

insight into the future.” As an oracle, Imogene not only can predict the future, but can also determine one’s fate. From this reading, Fitzgerald purposely employs vivid language illuminated by magical undertones to communicate Imogene’s powerful role over Basil.

Fitzgerald’s highly imaginative language also suggests that while Basil is under Imogene’s “spell” he is “granted an insight into the future.” This knowledge or “insight” occurs in the following lines, “For the first time in his life he realized a girl completely as something opposite and complementary to him and he was subject to a warm chill of mingled pleasure and pain.” As conveyed in this quote, Fitzgerald, through the character of Imogene, provides Basil with insight into the female gender. As a result of Basil’s awakening, he sees females as opposite in gender yet complementary to men. Basil’s belief that being female is the “opposite” of being male may lead him to believe that love is founded upon by the differences between the sexes. Many readers will agree that the phrase, “Opposites Attract,” is an adolescent approach to finding love. More importantly, Basil’s revelation on women is one obtained by the presence of Imogene communicating her power and importance.

Basil’s particular feelings on women can be viewed as a window into Fitzgerald’s private thoughts on females. Fitzgerald’s private opinions may not concur with Basil’s revelation, but his feelings may be contained in the paradoxes he incorporates into his prose. In the above-mentioned quote, Basil’s thoughts on women provide him with a “warm chill of mingled pleasure and pain.” Fitzgerald’s use of paradoxes may help explain his outlook on the nature of women. From this perspective, Fitzgerald may view women as contradictory and twofold resembling the nature of a

paradox. This idea suggests that Fitzgerald views women as inconstant, chaotic, and dangerous. As a result, a woman's conflicting personality has the power of causing men a "warm chill of mingled pleasure and pain."

One important scene to examine between Basil and Imogene occurs at the end of the story, "He Thinks He's Wonderful." In this scene, Basil's grandfather has agreed to let him use his electric car. Basil's grandfather's car is far from the infamous, Stutz Bearcat. Despite its condition, Basil is excited about borrowing the car. Basil's excitement stems from the crucial role a car plays in society. Additionally, a car holds special importance to Fitzgerald as well. While Basil is out cruising in his grandfather's car, he sees Imogene waving to him. Basil asks Imogene if she would like to go for a ride. After convincing her mother, Imogene tells Basil she can go for a ride. Basil decides he and Imogene will "go down to Smith's and have a claret lemonade." This scene is important because, Imogene is the first girl Basil takes for a ride in his grandpa's electric. Another reason this scene holds significance is Fitzgerald, yet again, pairs his female with a car. Again, we can guess that Fitzgerald sees both women and cars as objects of money, success, status, and power.

From a holistic perspective, Fitzgerald creates Imogene to play the role of Basil's "favorite girl" within the series. Their relationship can be viewed as a childhood encounter. As an adolescent, Basil knows he cares for Imogene, but he is not in love with her. Likewise, Imogene's feelings for Basil are not long-lasting and she quickly becomes interested in other boys such as Hubert Blair. It is important to note that even though they are adolescents their feelings for each other are fickle. We will see other females who alter their feelings for boys such as Basil in later stories (i.e. Jobena Dorsey and Minnie

Bibble). However, there is a brief moment contained within the story, “He Thinks He’s Wonderful,” where Basil believes he is in love with Imogene; however, his feelings are short-lived. Basil realizes that his early feelings of love for Imogene had withered, “The ecstatic moment of that afternoon had been a premature birth, an emotion left over from an already fleeting summer (35)” At this point, Basil moves past his encounter with Imogene and looks to “the boundless possibilities of summer.” As you know, these “boundless possibilities” lead to the infamous, Minnie Bibble.

### **Evelyn Beebe**

Sixteen-year-old Evelyn Beebe plays a small role within the Basil stories only appearing in the story, “The Captured Shadow.” Fitzgerald’s Evelyn is an important female to study, because she literally plays the role of the actress. As I mentioned earlier, Fitzgerald’s female by design is an actress. She knows how to captivate an audience and win over a crowd with her charm, beauty, and smile. In this story, Basil believes Evelyn Beebe is the ideal female to play the part of his leading lady in “The Captured Shadow,” which is a play Basil has written. He has decided to cast and direct the play in his hometown, St. Paul. When Basil contemplates the role of his leading lady, he discards females such as Margaret Torrence and Imogene Bissel. Finding an actress was becoming a difficult task until Basil began to see the “face” of his leading lady—Evelyn Beebe. It was now up to Basil to see if she would perform the role of Lellia Van Baker for his play. Once Basil decided Evelyn was perfect for the part, Fitzgerald’s prose permeates with imagery illuminating Evelyn as an actress. This imagery is highlighted in the following quote, where Evelyn is compared to Sarah Bernhardt:

Though Evelyn Beebe was only sixteen, her precocious charms had elevated her to an older crowd and to Basil she seemed of the very generation of his heroine, Leilia Van Baker. It was a little like asking Sarah Bernhardt for her services, but once her name had occurred to him, other possibilities seemed pale. (106)

His decision to associate Evelyn with the infamous actress, Sarah Bernhardt, provides readers with insight into his writing and his female. Ronald Berman's critical study, *The Great Gatsby and Modern Times*, explains how Fitzgerald communicated information about his character's personalities through the inclusion of films, actresses, Hollywood stars, advertisements, and magazines. Berman explains how Fitzgerald included these art forms, because they were meant to represent a character's ideal self. This information indicates that Fitzgerald developed characters, who purposely shaped their personality because they wanted to resemble a particular actress or Hollywood star (7-8). Fitzgerald's meticulous design for his characters not only shows his respect and admiration for art, theatre, magazines, and film but it also shows his belief that people have an ideal self in mind. When looking at Evelyn, Berman's critical study helps explain why Fitzgerald would have chosen Sarah Bernhardt as her ideal self. Sarah Bernhardt was a French actress who lived from 1844-1923. As a leading French actress of her time, Bernhardt was remembered for her emotional acting, poses, and use of gesture. These would have been qualities Evelyn would have admired and imitated in order to resemble an actress of such distinguished acclaim.

Later in the story, "The Captured Shadow," Basil and his pal Riply visit Evelyn at home to ask if she will play the part of Leilia Van Baker. This scene not only presents

Evelyn as a continual actress, but also illustrates her charm, power, and role-playing ability:

They sat inanimate as cushions on the sofa watching her. She was almost beautiful, with rather large features and bright fresh color behind which her heart seemed to be trembling with laughter. Her voice and her lithe body were always mimicking, ceaselessly caricaturing every sound and movement near by, until even those who disliked her admitted that Evelyn could always make you laugh. She finished her dance now with a false stumble and an awed expression as she clutched at the piano, and Basil and Riply chuckled. Seeing their embarrassment lighten, she came and sat down beside them, and they laughed again when she said: "Excuse my lack of self-control." (107)

As illustrated in this quote, Basil and Riply sit, "inanimate as cushions," gazing upon the talented and beautiful, Evelyn Beebe. Fitzgerald's comparison of Basil and Riply as inanimate objects communicates Evelyn's power over these males. Fitzgerald's discussion of Evelyn's facial features is remarkably vague. Similar to the females discussed earlier, Fitzgerald mentions Evelyn's facial features; however, he does not provide countless details of her beauty, instead leaves it to the imagination of the reader.

Fitzgerald focuses in on Evelyn's acting ability by mentioning her voice and gestures, highlighting her mimicking, caricaturing, and planned movements. These behaviors yet again, communicate Evelyn's role as an actress. Evelyn's acting is also conveyed in her "false stumble, where she pretends to fall, hoping to add humor to her "performance." Evelyn's voice is particularly important, because it indicates that whenever she talks it is an opportunity for her to act. In this scene, Evelyn's only lines

are "Excuse my lack of self-control." It is important to remember that Evelyn's lines are acted. Therefore, even though she says she lacks "self-control," this is not necessarily true. She may, instead, say these lines in order to achieve some desired effect. Thus, Fitzgerald's depiction of Evelyn makes her not only an actress on the stage, but also an actress at heart.

Ronald Berman's text, *The Great Gatsby and Modern Times*, can further shed light on Evelyn's character. Berman describes how Daisy has decided to become a role instead of being herself:

Why bother to endure conflict between self and role? Better to adjust self to role than the other way around. If women are expected to play-act for a good life, then perhaps they should become what they enact. And this essentially is what Daisy does, losing incrementally the demands of her own will and adopting protective coloration. (129)

As seen in the above quote, Berman explains why Fitzgerald's Daisy has decided to play a role. Daisy's reasoning for role-playing can be applied to Evelyn. Even though Evelyn is a sixteen-year old girl, by playing a role she realizes she can obtain social mobility and power. Why be herself? The only problem is that she sacrifices her sense of self by role-playing. According to Fitzgerald's world; however, playing a role is necessary, because it is one's only way of obtaining "happiness."

Evelyn's reasoning for acting may also be suggested through her choice in a beau. Evelyn is dating Andy Lockheart, "winner of the Western Golf Championship at eighteen, captain of his freshman baseball team, handsome, successful at everything he tried, a living symbol of the splendid, glamorous world of Yale." By playing a role,



Evelyn realizes it increases her chances of finding a suitable boyfriend while she continues to look for the ideal husband. Evelyn's decision to act in order to obtain social mobility is Fitzgerald's way of displaying her intelligence. Evelyn as intelligent female is seen in her decision to play the role of the vivacious and lovely female in order to meet financial and successful men. On the other hand, Fitzgerald's decision to make Evelyn act and play roles to win over the hearts of men displays her powerlessness. In order for Evelyn to move up economically, she has to sacrifice her identity. Ultimately, Evelyn's sacrifice of self makes her a puppet to the whims of a man's world.

### **Jobena Dorsey**

At the opening of this story, Basil meets with John Granby, a man who attended St. Regis School. Granby advises Basil to use his "power" among the students for "good." Granby hopes Basil will stop drinking, smoking, dancing, kissing, and dating. He tells Basil to use his power among the students to promote them to disengage in these behaviors. Granby believes if Basil follows his advice he will live "the perfect life." Basil attempts to follow Granby's advice, but quickly realizes, that living the life of a puritan may seem "perfect," but it will not get him the girl. As you will see, Jobena has a different idea for "the perfect life," and it does not involve giving up "smoking, drinking, and dancing."

In a quick overview of her character, Jobena Dorsey is a powerful, dangerous, bold, and beautiful female. She captures Basil's heart, through her outright words and risk-taking behaviors. She not only tell Basil how she feels in the story, "The Perfect Life," but she also provides him with advice in his later dilemma with Minnie Bibble in the story, "Basil and Cleopatra." Jobena is my favorite female in the Basil stories,

because she speaks her mind and does not listen to Basil's opinions. From the conversations which occur between these two characters, it is clear that Basil entrusts Jobena with his feelings more so than any other female found in the series. For Basil, Jobena is a female he can talk to and receive a real answer. Jobena's ability to speak her mind and follow the truth makes her a powerful and ultimately, respected female.

Jobena Dorsey (age sixteen) first appears in the story, "The Perfect Life." Jobena, is the sister of George Dorsey, a friend of Basil's from school. George invites Basil to stay with his family during the Thanksgiving Holiday in New York City. The Dorsey's chauffeur meets Basil and George at Grand Central Station. Once in the city, Fitzgerald uses words like "heaven," and "gold" to communicate that Basil is in awe at entering this new world surrounded by wealth, "About them the buildings broke up through many planes toward heaven, at their base the wintry color of an old man's smile, on through diagonals of diluted gold, edged with purple where their cornices floated past the stationary sky" (127). This imagery not only highlights the wealth found in New York City, but it also hints at the wealth had by the Dorsey's.

While Basil rides in the Dorsey's "low, English town car," he is first introduced to Jobena. Unlike Imogene and Evelyn, Fitzgerald's introduction of Jobena is rather different. Jobena, introduced without a smile, is described as reserved and cold to Basil, "As they came up she received her brother's kiss perfunctorily, nodded stiffly to Basil and murmured, "how-dy; y-do" without smiling" (127). Basil is not initially impressed with Jobena; however, by the time they reach the Dorsey's residence he has come to believe her to be "one of prettiest girls he had ever seen in his life" (128).

Through Basil and Jobena's initial meeting, Fitzgerald expands upon the personality of both characters. For example, we notice Basil's fickle character, when he initially does not like Jobena and then changes his mind and says, "she is one of the prettiest girls he had ever seen in his life." It is important to recall how a number of girls have floated in and out of Basil's mind since the opening of the series. This may only be a sign of his adolescent behavior; however, we will also see fickle behavior in adults such as Daisy Buchanan and girls like Jobena Dorsey and Minnie Bibbie. Additionally, Basil's decision to follow Granby's advice is an indicator of his malleable personality. Basil has difficulty in making decisions and instead relies upon others to provide him with advice. As you may recall, Basil initially is not attracted to Jobena, then he thinks she is the "prettiest girl in the world," and later he believes she is the "ideal girl to marry." Unlike Basil, Jobena's interest in Basil occurs, because she believes her relationship with Skiddy De Vinci is over; however, when Basil begins instructs her on how to live her life she feels she should give Skiddy another shot. Another aspect of Jobena's character, which is mentioned in their initial meeting, is her reserved and cold demeanor. Fitzgerald's early depiction of Jobena is of importance, because he alludes to how his female can come off as cold and reserved; however, still be bold and dangerous, addressing her duality within the text.

When Basil realizes his attraction to Jobena, Fitzgerald describes her appearance. As we have seen earlier, Fitzgerald illustrates a woman's beauty through her face, smile, and voice:

It was a puzzling face. Her long eyelashes lay softly against her pale cheeks, almost touching them, as if to conceal the infinite boredom in her eyes, but when

she smiled, her expression was illumined by a fiery and lovely friendliness, as if she were saying, "Go on, I'm listening. I'm fascinated. I've been waiting—oh for ages—for just this moment with you. (128)

Fitzgerald begins Jobena's description by stating how her face is puzzling. Fitzgerald may have used the word "puzzling" to suggest that Jobena is a difficult female to read. This difficulty may stem from her duality within the text, making her personality difficult to decipher. Either way Fitzgerald's use of the word "puzzling" rouses many questions. Additionally, Fitzgerald's use of the word "boredom" is another important word to explore. The "infinite boredom" seen in Jobena's eyes alludes to her energy and passion. The pairing of these two words also conveys her hunger for excitement. As you will later see when Jobena arrives at Emil's, she embraces entertaining activities such as dancing and kissing. Jobena's hunger for excitement also demonstrates her interest in risk-taking behaviors, such as smoking and a sudden engagement to Skiddy De Vinci.

Similar to Edith Wharton's female, Lily Bart from *The House of Mirth*, Jobena's character is defined through her engagement in risk-taking behaviors such as smoking and kissing many boys. These risk-taking behaviors illustrate her confidence, passion, and danger as compared to those females that surround her. Unlike Lily Bart; however, Jobena's involvement in risk-taking behaviors, does not threaten her life. Instead, Jobena's involvement in risk-taking behaviors communicates her power in comparison to Basil, who does not engage in these activities.

Fitzgerald use of contrast in his early description of Jobena also provides insight into the nature of her personality. For example, Fitzgerald's pairing of "pale cheeks" and "fiery and lovely friendliness" communicates Jobena's double personality, where she can

appear both reserved and passionate. This double personality not only shows the pragmatic side of her personality, but also illustrates her dangerous side. As a pragmatic female, Jobena possesses a dual nature in order to excel in a man's world. From this perspective, Jobena appears either reserved or aggressive depending on the situation in order to obtain power, money, and success. On the other hand, Jobena's duality communicates her dangerous nature. As a dangerous female, Jobena's continual use of duality may indicate that she does not know what she wants masking her chaotic nature. Fitzgerald's conflicted pairing of words demonstrates his female as both pragmatic and chaotic. One explanation for Fitzgerald's portrayal of Jobena as both pragmatic and chaotic may stem from his past relationships with women, who deceived him through their dual personality.

Jobena as powerful female can be found in her words to Basil. Very little dialogue occurs between Basil and his females, therefore, when Jobena speaks it indicates her power. Jobena's words not only demonstrate her as a powerful, but also define her as a bold female. For example, while in New York City, George and Jobena decide to take Basil dancing at Emil's restaurant. While at Emil's, Jobena has no problem in telling Basil what she thinks about him. She makes an "outrageous remark" saying, " 'I'll bet you've kissed a thousand girls in your time, [...] 'with that mouth.' " Jobena's bold comment, also reveals her sexuality through the words "kiss" and "mouth." Additionally, her use of the word "bet" alludes to a premature interest in gambling.

While driving home from Emil's, another important scene occurs between Jobena and Basil. In this scene, Basil attempts to convince Jobena to "turn over a new leaf" and stop engaging in "savage" activities such as kissing, smoking, and dancing. As you may

recall, Basil, following the advice of John Granby, believes it is his moral duty to help Jobena stop these bad behaviors and learn how to live a "perfect life." In opposition to Basil's views, Jobena as powerful and bold female voices her opinions about her vision for the "perfect life," "Sitting back in the cab, she repeated dreamily, 'The perfect life. I'd like my life to be perfect. I'd like to suffer, if I could find something worth suffering for, and I'd like to never do anything low or small or mean, but just have big sins'" (134).

After Basil continues to heckle Jobena with statements like, "What if you meet some man that has kept himself pure and never gone around kissing anybody except his family, and you have to tell him that you went around behaving disgustingly?" (134). At this point, Jobena has had enough of Basil and his control on how she should live her life:

'And then some day when some upright and straightforward man comes along and says, Will you marry me? You'll be able to say you never danced suggestive modern dances, except the Spanish tango and the Boston, and you never kissed anybody—that is, since you were sixteen, and maybe you wouldn't have to say that you ever kissed anybody at all.'

That wouldn't be the truth,' she said in an odd voice. 'Shouldn't I tell him the truth?'

'You could tell him you didn't know any better.'

'Oh.' (135)

After Basil tells Jobena to act ignorant when responding to the perfect husband, she has had her fill of Basil Duke Lee. Jobena's disgust causes her to flee from Basil and return to Skiddy De Vinci, who does not attempt to control her. Jobena's bold and outright comments are revealed in her discussion with Skiddy about Basil's heinous

requests. In this conversation, Basil is described as a “nasty little prig,” who gave her “an old fashioned moral lecture about nicotine and modern dancing and kissing (136).” Jobena’s impulsive and dangerous nature is seen, when she tells Skiddy “Yesterday I thought I was through with you, Skiddy, but ever since this happened I’ve had a vision of a thousand Mr. Basil Duke Lees.[...] If you want, I’ll marry you in Greenwich tomorrow” (136).

Jobena’s bold words and “strong force” make her a powerful female. It is important to communicate Basil’s dependence on her and awe of her character and demeanor. Jobena’s powerful hold on Basil is communicated in the following scene:

At one, Basil’s light was burning. Walking up and down in his room, he made out case after case for himself, with Jobena in the role of villainness, but each case was wrecked upon the rock of his bitter humiliation. “A nasty little prig”—the words, uttered with conviction and scorn, had driven the high principal of John Granby from his head. He was a slave to his own admirations, and in the past twenty-four hours Jobena’s personality had become the strongest force in his life; deep in his heart he believed that what she had said was true. (136-137)

As illustrated in this quote, Jobena has a hold on Basil’s heart, while acting as a form of consciousness ending his following with John Granby. Even though, Basil tries to convince himself that Jobena is a villainness, he is unable to see her in this light. Instead, he sees her as the “strongest force” in his life. Due to her power, Basil finds Skiddy De Vinci and ends the chances for Jobena’s sudden marriage. At the end of the tale, Basil and Jobena reunite and he tells her how he did not mean what he had said about living a perfect life. Fitzgerald alludes to a love scene between the two in the dark by the

following lines, “ ‘There’s a light switch somewhere,’ she said. ‘Still holding her hand, he drew her close and tightened his arm around her in the darkness. ‘Just for this once we don’t need the light’ ” (144).

Jobena makes another important appearance in the final tale, “Basil and Cleopatra.” In this tale, Basil has become engrossed in another female, Minnie Bibble. Basil is distraught and confused because of Minnie’s harsh treatment toward him. Basil realizes Minnie’s interest in Le Moyne, a southerner on the Princeton football team. In this story, Basil has a chance to defeat Le Moyne in the Princeton versus Yale football game. Due to luck, fate or both, Basil wins the game for the Yale team. Unfortunately, Minnie is not there to see Basil’s accomplishment. After the game, Basil, George, and Jobena have dinner at the Taft. Jobena greets Basil telling him, “You’re getting very important,” as a result of his involvement in the football game. Basil recalls how he had once thought he was in love with Jobena and now realizes he is not. He asks Jobena why their relationship ended and she replies, “I let it go,” and Basil then asks “didn’t I have anything to do with it,” and she “shook her head.” In their brief interlude on their relationship, Jobena’s powerful role is addressed through her ability to be the sole individual to decide on the conclusion of their relationship.

After this discussion, Basil decides to ask Jobena for some personal advice. Without mentioning his situation with Minnie, Basil asks Jobena, “If a girl who had been ‘crazy about a boy’ became suddenly infatuated with another, what ought the first boy to do?” (Basil’s hypothetical question is exactly what has occurred between him and Minnie.)



Jobena advises Basil that the only thing he can do in this situation is to “Let her go.” Jobena realizes the effect her advice has on Basil and tells him to relay the whole story. Basil explains his situation, while empowering Minnie by offering her immortal status amongst the goddesses of old: “if she was just anybody I could get over it, no matter how much I loved her. But she isn’t—she’s the most popular, most beautiful girl I’ve ever seen. I mean she’s like Messalina and Cleopatra and Salome and all that” (182). While Basil continues to immortalize Minnie, Jobena realizes that Basil does not see her the way he envisions Minnie. When, Jobena tells Basil that she is not like, Cleopatra or Minnie for that matter. Basil says, “No. That is, you’re sort of like her all the girls I’ve cared about are sort of all the same.” Ultimately, this comment is a testimony to my research exhibiting my belief in an existed pattern in each of Fitzgerald’s females.

In a final attempt to offer Basil sound advice, Jobena, as archetypal wise woman, tells him that his relationship with Minnie is over: “You’re too much in love. All that’s left for you to do is to show her you don’t care. Any girl hates to lose an old beau; so she may even smile at you—but don’t go back. It’s all over” (182). In response to Jobena’s words, Basil realizes that he must move on from the likes of Minnie. As a result, Jobena’s character acts as a powerful influence and conscious voice in helping Basil along his path of manhood.

## **Minnie Bibble**

When studying Minnie’s character, it is important to recognize her powerful role within the text, which is illustrated through archetypes including the southern belle, enchantress, actress, goddess, and heartbreaker. Minnie can be read in the realm of these archetypes, because she uses her symbolic cards of beauty, style, and grace to win Basil’s

heart. Unlike the other female characters we have studied, Minnie can be seen in a negative light, because she manipulates Basil and tampers with his heart. (Basil, yet again, becomes engrossed in Minnie, establishing her power). As powerful female, Minnie views Basil as an object or card she will play until she becomes bored or a better man comes along. Minnie's narcissistic and selfish nature makes her the main focus of her cause. From this perspective, she does not mind who she hurts, even if it is Basil. This careless side of her character enables her to be seen as an indifferent, cruel, and dangerous female. Additionally, her lack of concern for Basil's feelings makes her a heartbreaker. Due to Minnie's conflicting characteristics, she can be read as both a stereotypical "good" girl and "bad" girl demonstrating her duality. As a result, Minnie's contradictory personality defines her as both a beautiful and dangerous female.

Ermine Gilberte Labouisse Bibbie, better known as Minnie Bibbie, is first introduced to readers in the story, "He Thinks He's Wonderful." In this story, Basil has difficulty in finding a girl, because most girls believe he is conceited. Just when readers think Basil has lost his luck with women, Bill Kampf, an acquaintance of Basil's, asks him to stay at his place for the weekend, because his cousin, Minnie Bibbie, is coming for a visit. Unlike Margaret, Imogene, and Jobena, Minnie is a southern belle from New Orleans. Fitzgerald's depiction of Minnie as a southern belle is of importance, because this aspect of her character connotatively suggests her grace, money, and beauty. Additionally, as southern belle Minnie can be seen in connection with Daisy Buchanan.

Fitzgerald's early illustration of Minnie is a depiction of a fifteen-year old southern belle in "exile":

Ermine Gilberte Labouisse Bibbie was in exile. Her parents had brought her from

New Orleans to Southampton in May, hoping that the active outdoor life proper to a girl of fifteen would take her thoughts from love. But North or South, a storm of sapling arrows flew about her. She was "engaged" before the first of June. (92)

This quote not only highlights Minnie as a beautiful female, but also emphasizes her as a dangerous one as well. Fitzgerald addresses Minnie's beauty when he states how whether, "North or South, a storm of sapling arrows flew about her." This quote suggests the presence of Cupid, the God of Love. From this interpretation, Cupid recognizes Minnie's beauty and strikes numerous arrows into the hearts of men. In addition to this reading, Fitzgerald's inclusion of Minnie's "exile" and sudden engagement play an important role in defining her as a dangerous female. It is clear that Minnie has been exiled to the country, because of her constant interest in all things associated with men and relationships. As a result of Minnie's constant involvement in various relationships, she becomes engaged. Her engagement is not serious; however, it implies her dangerous nature, because she is flirtatious and fickle when choosing a man. Minnie's fickle character also indicates that she can become bored with men quickly.

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Fitzgerald elaborates upon Minnie's beauty through the use of floral imagery connecting her to Daisy Buchanan, "She was of a radiant freshness; her head had reminded otherwise not illiterate young men of damp blue violets, pierced with blue windows that looked into a bright soul, with today's new roses showing through" (92). As addressed in this quote, Minnie as symbolic flower is evident in her connection to flowers represented in the following words, "radiant freshness," "damp blue violets," and "new roses."

A further analysis of Fitzgerald's use of floral imagery is highlighted in Glenn Settle's article, "Fitzgerald's Daisy: The Siren Voice." In his article, Settle traces the significance of the name Daisy as a defining word in explaining her personality. Additionally, he explains how the word Daisy may stand for "flower fairy" (117) or "enchantress flower," (117) suggesting her appealing power, grace, and beauty. Settle also draws upon numerous quotes provided within the text that associate and link Daisy to flowers (116-117). It is of importance to mention how Settle's research provides a new reading of Daisy's character, which can help shed light on other female characters.

After studying Settle's research, it is important to look at Minnie as "enchantress flower." As an enchantress, even before Minnie is introduced to Basil, she has decided to "come to Basil as a sort of initiation, turning his eyes out from himself and giving him a first dazzling glimpse into the world of love"(92). This comment illustrates her power and planned decision to affect Basil. From this reading, Minnie has decided to induct Basil into the world of love; however, she will only provide him with a "glimpse" into her Eden.

Another form of Minnie's power is shown through Fitzgerald's use of the words "dazzling" and "sparkling" in describing her smile. Similar to Imogene, Minnie's smile is a crucial physical feature, which helps in defining and capturing the ambiance that surrounds her. Minnie as archetypal goddess is seen in her beauty and vitality, which demonstrates her power over Basil. His fascination with Minnie is illustrated when Fitzgerald describes how her "sparkling smile" puts Basil in a trance:

She looked at Basil, a childish open look; then opened her eyes wider as if she had some sort of comic misgivings, and smiled---she smiled---

For all the candor of this smile, its effect, because of the special contours of Minnie's face and independent of her mood, was of sparkling invitation.

Whenever it appeared to Basil it seemed to be suddenly inflated and borne upward, a little farther each time, only to be set down when the smile had reached a point where it must become a grin, and chose instead to melt away. It was like a drug. (92-93)

As such, Minnie as powerful female is illustrated in her smile's alluring and drug-like quality. This quote not only demonstrates Minnie as goddess and enchantress, but it also demonstrates her role as an actress. Minnie as actress is suggested through Fitzgerald's language, which implies that she purposely opened her eyes wider and planned her smile in order to capture Basil's attention.

Fitzgerald use of conversation and an omniscient narrator allow the reader to come a step closer in understanding Minnie's nature and the reason for Basil's deep admiration. Fitzgerald's description of Minnie's personality and insight into her mind enable the reader to see the masculine, dangerous, and cruel side of her character.

After Minnie and Basil's initial encounters in the story, "He Thinks He's Wonderful," she reappears in the story, "Forging Ahead." In this tale, Basil gets a job from his Uncle Reilly to help pay for his education at Yale. Basil's "job" is escorting his cousin, Rhoda Sinclair to various functions such as the dance at the Lake club.

While at the Lake club, Basil sees the "sparkling" Minnie Bibble. When Minnie first talks to Basil her voice is described as "husky with pleasure though she was at the

age when pleasure usually hides behind grins and mumbles” (155). Fitzgerald’s decision to highlight Minnie’s voice and use the word “husky” suggests her masculinity. From this perspective, Minnie’s masculinity suggests Basil’s femininity. Fitzgerald’s comment also emphasizes how Minnie’s voice is “husky with pleasure” implying a sexual and dangerous side. Minnie’s sexual and dangerous personality is suggested, because Fitzgerald mentions how she exhibits “pleasure” which is only seen “behind grins and mumbles” of girls her own age. Thus, in this scene Fitzgerald demonstrates Minnie’s duality through her contradictory roles as male and female, virginal and sexual.

Later in this scene, Basil sees Minnie and he notices how she is, “the center of a moving whirl” (155). These words suggest how her popularity, beauty, charm, and energy make her the focus of attention. Basil is only able to dance with Minnie a couple times at the Lake club, because he is escorting Rhoda. After the dance, Minnie contemplates Basil’s behavior at the Lake club. Unaware of Basil’s obligation to Rhoda, Minnie feels, “Temporarily, at least, was fascinated by his indifference, and even a little unhappy. But her precociously emotional temperament would not long stand neglect”(158). Because Minnie feels neglected, she decides to pay Basil a visit.

When Basil arrives home he finds Minnie sitting on his front porch. Minnie tells Basil, “I had to see you” and “You’ve been so funny and distant to me” (150). Basil, “Intoxicated by her presence on his familiar porch, he found no words to answer” (150). Finally, he comes to his senses, and decides to drive out to “a place he had saved for such a time like this” (159) in his grandpa’s electric. Yet another scene, occurs where Fitzgerald’s pairs his female with a car. Basil and Minnie drive down to “a little pigtail of a road left from the excavations of Prospect Park” (159). While together, Basil asks

Minnie if she's still a "flirt" (159). Minnie answers by discussing how she has changed from her old "fast" ways when she was younger. She tells Basil how she "honestly" has tried to "act properly." However, she'll "never be an angel" (159). Fitzgerald's construction of this scene and choice of the words "honestly" and "angel" suggest Minnie's devious, sexual, and dangerous nature. Minnie's devious nature is exhibited in her lies to Basil throughout the series. Fitzgerald's use of the word "angel" implies that if Minnie is not an "angel" than she has the potential of being a devil or "devilish," hinting at her sexual and dangerous side.

After Minnie admits that she will "never be an angel" (159), a reminiscent scene of *The Great Gatsby* enfolds between Minnie and Basil, linking Minnie to Daisy and Basil to Gatsby:

He held her away suddenly, looked at her, made a strained sound of delight. There it was—in the curve of her mouth, the tilted shadow of her nose on her cheek, the point of dull fire in her eyes—the promise that she could lead him into a world in which he would always be happy.

'Say I love you,' he whispered.

'I'm in love with you.'

'Oh, no; that's not the same.'

She hesitated. 'I've never said the other to anybody,'

'Please say it.'

'She blushed the color of sunset.

'At my party,' she whispered. 'It'd be easier at night.' (160)

This scene is very similar to the one, which occurs between Gatsby and Daisy. In *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald's Gatsby wants Daisy to tell Tom that she has never loved anyone but him. Despite Gatsby's overwhelming love for Daisy, she replies "I did love him (Tom) once—but I loved you too" (140). To Gatsby, this word "too" ruined his dream that she had always only loved him. In comparison to Daisy, Minnie's comment that she was only "in love" with Basil destroyed his hope that she truly loved him. Even though Minnie and Basil's relationship occurs during adolescence, the relationship between Gatsby and Daisy and Minnie and Basil illustrate how the female characters do not love the male characters.

This scene not only links Minnie to Daisy, but it also demonstrates Minnie's cruel and cold character. Since Minnie is only a teenager it is understandable that she may not love Basil. Moreover, Fitzgerald's depiction of her influences the reader to feel sympathy for Basil. Readers feel this sympathy for Basil, because he has put his heart into Minnie's hands and she has intentionally strung him along waiting for the day when a better catch would appear. Basil is foolish in investing his heart to Minnie; however, she realizes his feelings of love and continues to be cruel, cold, and indifferent to his feelings.

In the last story of the series, "Basil and Cleopatra," Fitzgerald continues to provide readers with a picture of Basil as the victim and Minnie as the cold and callous ice queen. Basil continues to "gulp" (171) down Minnie's lies while she plays with his heart and wrestles with when she will "let Basil go" (173) for Le Moyne. Furthermore, while Basil plays the role of the victim, Minnie is portrayed as a powerful ambiance and presence in Basil's world:



Wherever she was, became a beautiful and enchanted place to Basil, but he did not think of it that way. He thought the fascination was inherent in the locality, and long afterward a commonplace street or the mere name of a city would exude a peculiar glow, a sustained sound, that struck his soul alert with delight. In her presence he was too absorbed to notice his surroundings; so that her absence never made them empty, but, rather, sent him seeking for her through haunted rooms and gardens that he had never really seen before. (165)

Besides Minnie's role as powerful ambiance and presence, she is also compared to several great females in history including "Messalina and Cleopatra and Salome" (182). As the ending of the series shows, Basil does let his feelings for Minnie go; however, her power over Basil cannot be denied and it is this power, which is the defining characteristic of her personality.

Basil's overwhelming feelings for Minnie are discussed in greater detail than his feelings for other females like Imogene or Margaret. Fitzgerald purposely elaborates upon Basil's fascination with Minnie to illustrate her power over him. Basil's feelings for Minnie also illustrate his role as symbolic fool. Basil can be seen as a fool, because he remains enamored with Minnie even when she becomes bored and needs to experience "the mysterious opening glory" (173) of a new relationship with Le Moyne. Basil as fool, also calls to mind Daisy's comment within *The Great Gatsby*, when she hopes her daughter will be a "beautiful little fool" (21). In this scene, Daisy realizes the only way she can progress in society is by playing the role of the fool and she hopes her daughter will learn the importance of this advice. Daisy's decision to play the role of the fool

empowers her, whereas Basil's ignorance that he is a fool, removes his power. Therefore, Basil as fool, empowers Fitzgerald's female not his male character.

According to Frances Kerr's article, "Feeling Half Feminine: Modernism and the Politics of Emotion in *The Great Gatsby*," Fitzgerald saw women as "emotionally passive" and "weak" (406), which are characteristics found within Basil's character. Basil's demonstration of these characteristics make him "half-feminine." Kerr continues to discuss how Fitzgerald's novel, "bears the imprint of a personal struggle with the gender-inflected standards of modernism" (427), illustrating Fitzgerald's use of gender-binaries and a blurring of stereotypical roles. If Kerr's opinion enables Basil to be read as a feminine man, then Minnie can be seen as a masculine woman.

When looking back at Fitzgerald's construction of Basil and Minnie, he hoped to warn readers of young girls, like Minnie Bibble, who have the potential of ruining a man like Basil. However, Fitzgerald's fear of girls like Minnie provides her with tremendous power over Basil and Fitzgerald. Nonetheless, Basil uses his intelligence to grow and move past Minnie. Fitzgerald; however, does not move past Minnie, because elements of her personality are found in other female characters. It needs to be mentioned that even though Fitzgerald's depicts Minnie as a heartbreaker, it does not mean that he hates women and finds them to be cruel. Instead, Fitzgerald's construction of Minnie demonstrates how he believes women play a variety of contradictory yet powerful roles.

## **Daisy Buchanan**

Daisy's resemblance to the females found within the Basil stories is unmistakable, because she too is dual in nature, beautiful, resilient, intelligent, indifferent, sexual, and dangerous. In addition to these traits, Fitzgerald defines Daisy through her voice and

symbolic connection to flowers. These two defining characteristics of Daisy's personality are discussed in Glenn Settle's article, "Fitzgerald's Daisy: The Siren Voice" (115-124). I have already discussed many of the similarities that exist between Daisy and Minnie. Instead of describing the similarities between Daisy and the girls from the Basil stories, I will discuss Daisy's dual role within the text, where she can be read as a dangerous and powerful female and as a powerless commodity.

Many critics have looked at Daisy as the victim, or object within *The Great Gatsby* removing her power. For example, Carol Wershoven's article, "Insatiable Girls," explains how Daisy is a child bride and ultimately, an object that must be saved and protected by her husband (94-96). In comparison, Leland Person's article, "'Herstory' and Daisy Buchanan" discusses how Daisy is the real victim of *The Great Gatsby* (250). Unlike these critics, I believe there is more to Daisy's character than just her role as a powerless female. Instead, I see Daisy from both sides. On one hand, Daisy can be read as a dangerous and powerful female, because of her sexuality, risk-taking behaviors, and ability to kill. On the other hand, Daisy can be interpreted as a victim, object, and commodity. Fitzgerald's decision to create Daisy to be read both ways, illustrates her dual nature. As a result, Fitzgerald's repeated use of female characters dual in origin is a testimony of the connection between the girls from the Basil stories and Daisy Buchanan.

Daisy's powerful role within the text is suggested through her sexuality and involvement in dangerous acts. Daisy as sexual female is first defined by her voice. Daisy's voice not only illustrates her energy, but also suggests her involvement in "exciting things":

It was the kind of voice that the ear follows up and down as if each speech is an arrangement of notes that will never be played again. Her face was sad and lovely with bright things in it, bright eyes and a passionate mouth—but there was an excitement in her voice that men who had cared for her found difficult to forget: a singing compulsion, a whispered “Listen” a promise that she had done gay, exciting things just a while since and that there were gay, exciting things hovering in the next. (14)

This quote suggests that Daisy can be read as dangerous and sexual, because her voice possesses the power to enchant and control men, by making them “Listen.” The words “exciting things” also provide insight into Daisy’s character. Fitzgerald’s use of the words “exciting things” suggests Daisy’s interest in thrilling events, which can slide from the sexual to the dangerous, or both.

Daisy as dangerous female can be seen in her affair with Gatsby, when she is married to Tom Buchanan. Daisy does not shy away from the idea of being with a man other than her husband. She, instead, risks the consequences of engaging in an extramarital affair. Fitzgerald also demonstrates Daisy as dangerous female, by suggesting that she engaged in sexual relations with Gatsby before marriage, “He took what he could get, ravenously and unscrupulously—eventually he took Daisy one still October night, took her because he had no real right to touch her hand” (156). Fitzgerald’s inclusion of Daisy’s promiscuous, sexual, and dangerous past is further suggested when Gatsby mentions how he is “excited too that many men had already loved Daisy” (156).

Gatsby's belief that Daisy is the "first 'nice' girl" (155) can suggest her duality, by explaining why she can be read as the virgin and sexual temptress. On one hand, Daisy as virgin can be read through the word "nice," because it suggests her well-behaved, proper appearance and manner. On the other hand, the word "nice" can also suggest Daisy's dual, secret, dark side—her tendency to be the "bad" girl. Interestingly, when Daisy is the bad girl, the dangerous girl, the sexual girl, she receives more power than when she conforms to the role of the "good" girl. Later in the novel, Daisy, yet again, can be read as the dangerous female, because of her ability to kill. Daisy kills and walks away from the bloody spectacle of Myrtle Wilson's death leaving Gatsby to "clean up the mess" (188).

Despite Daisy's power, many critics believe Daisy can be read as a weak female. For example, Leland Person describes how Daisy can be viewed as a victim of Tom Buchanan and the world of men. Person's article explains how after Myrtle's death, Daisy "forces the story to be played out to its logical conclusion," (257) where she is "victimized by a male tendency to project a self-satisfying, yet ultimately dehumanizing, image on woman" (257). In contrast to Person, I do not believe Daisy is able to make a choice, but is instead unclear of what she wants, exhibiting her role as chaotic and weak female.

Mary McAlleer Balkun's article, " 'One Cannot Both Spend and Have': The Economics of Gender in the Josephine Stories," describes how Josephine Perry can be seen as a dangerous, chaotic, and ultimately, powerless female in a world run by patriarchal society. She explains how Josephine's dangerous nature stems from "her failure to make conscious decisions" because "her actions are attributed to instinct rather

than to any actual though process" (133). Balkun interprets Josephine as a representation of chaos and, therefore, a dangerous female:

She represents chaos, a threat to the "natural" order of things where wealth, class, and power give one ascendance over all others. She seems at times to realize the potential risks in her course of action, but whatever inclination she has to be "good" is overwhelmed by her desire to live her life on her own terms. She also does not know what she wants. (133)

Balkun's interpretation of Josephine can also be applied to Daisy. Daisy uses instinct and immediacy when making a decision. For example, when she decides to marry Tom it is because "she wanted her life shaped now, immediately—and the decision must be made by some force—of love, of money, of unquestionable practicality—that was close at hand" (159). Like Gatsby, Daisy wants "too much" (139) and as a result cannot decide between her dream with Gatsby and her reality with Tom. Therefore, Daisy yearns for independence, but cannot make a decision.

Daisy as powerless female not only stems from her inability to make a decision, but also is a result of the stereotypical roles and norms imposed on her by the social and economic forces within society. Following this opinion, Carol Wershoven's article discusses how *The Great Gatsby* focuses upon trading and the ideal trade is Daisy Buchanan (93). From this reading, Daisy can be seen as a purchase in the market of economic trade making her a commodity. Similar to Wershoven, Balkun's article explains how even though Josephine can buy items she is a "product in both senses of the word—of social, and economic forces that turns everything into a transaction, one in which women are unable to participate equitably" (136). In accord with both critics,

Daisy's money affords her many luxuries; however, the patriarchal structure, which she belongs to, is founded upon economic and social forces, ultimately deeming her a commodity.

Despite Daisy's depiction as a powerless female, she also possesses tremendous power over Gatsby. One example of Daisy's power over Gatsby exists in his idealistic vision of her. Gatsby deifies Daisy and believes she has magical powers to change the past. Daisy can simply transform Gatsby's world by just saying she only loved him, because this is Gatsby's greatest hope, to be loved alone. In one unforgettable scene, Fitzgerald demonstrates the power behind Daisy's words:

'Daisy, that's all over now,' he said earnestly. It doesn't matter any more. Just tell him the truth—that you never loved him—and it's all wiped out forever.'

She looked at him blindly. 'Why—how could I love him—possibly?'

' You never loved him.' [...]

' I never loved him,' she said. [...]

'Please don't.' Her voice was cold but the rancour was gone from it. She looked at Gatsby.' There, Jay,' she said—but her hand as she tried to light a cigarette was trembling. Suddenly she threw the cigarette and the burning match on the carpet.

'Oh, you want too much!' she cried to Gatsby,' I love you now— isn't that enough? I can't help what's past.' She began to sob helplessly. ' I did love him once—but I loved you too.'

Gatsby's eyes opened and closed.

'You loved me too?' he repeated. (138-139).

Even while trembling and sobbing, Daisy's words hold power, because they destroy Gatsby's hope—that she alone can love him. In short, Gatsby's idealistic vision of Daisy is false, she cannot change the past or say that she only loved him. Daisy is only human and it is her humanity, which, ultimately, kills Gatsby.

## **Conclusions**

In this paper, Fitzgerald's females were explored and interpreted. Hopefully, you have developed an interest in Fitzgerald's females. I enjoyed working with these females and I believe that there is a real, human source for the birth of Daisy Buchanan, Minnie Bibble, Jobena Dorsey, Evelyn Beebe, Imogene Bissel, and Margaret Torrence. By working on this paper, I have come to understand why I have such passion for Fitzgerald's characters. It is because parts of them are in each one of us. Their humanity makes them real and their duality further makes them one of us. We, like Fitzgerald's characters, are both good and bad. We have our strengths and our weaknesses. Oftentimes, we are powerful and powerless. We wish to be loved as Gatsby loved Daisy, we desire to change the past, and we fight for our dreams to come true.

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